



Call for CCTV to protect drivers and passengers

CAMERA IN CAB MOVE FOR TAXIS

Report by Jamie Brassington

TAXIS in Dudley could be equipped with CCTV in a bid to protect both drivers and passengers from harm.

Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles would be fitted with cameras under new proposals being considered by Dudley Council's taxi committee today (Thursday).

Plans have been drawn up after taxi drivers approached council bosses with safety concerns. Shaz Saleem, the chairman of Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association, has welcomed the proposals but feels Dudley Council has taken too long in addressing the issue.

Mr Saleem said: "We have wanted CCTV for a while. We can't use CCTV at the moment and need the council's permission to do so.

"We were given verbal permission in November but haven't had anything yet in writing.

"We are still talking about CCTV when drivers are getting attacked left, right and centre. How can the council treat drivers like this and why has it taken so long? Taxi drivers face danger and we have been saying it for a while now."

Council bosses look likely to back the plans for CCTV.

Responsible

They want taxi drivers to install their own equipment and be responsible for the footage. The council would not be responsible for any data breaches, such as the misuse of data, which could prove costly if they were penalised.

Mr Saleem has also backed that proposal but there are different options on the table.

Dudley Council had previously drawn up plans which would see the local authority responsible for all CCTV footage. However, legislation from the European Union is coming into effect next month which will place more responsibility on data holders. This has resulted in Dudley Council opting to give taxi drivers full control of CCTV in their cabs.

Legislation will give more power to people to access video of themselves from local authorities.

Councillor Alan Hopwood, chairman of the taxi committee, said: "The committee likes the idea of fitting CCTV optionality in vehicles without council-imposed controls."

FIREFIGHTERS CLIMB A LADDER TO EVEREST HEIGHT



Step to it – firefighters from Haden Cross get ready for their Everest challenge on Saturday at the Merry Hill shopping centre

TEN members of a Black Country fire crew will be climbing the equivalent of the height of Mount Everest to raise funds for a fire-fighting charity.

Firefighters from Haden Cross Fire Blue Watch and Green Watch will be scaling a ladder 126 times each at the Merry Hill shopping centre, outside Debenhams, on Saturday to raise money for the Fire Fighters Charity.

The group will climb to raise the target of

£1,000 with an online campaign already seeing £640 pledged in donations.

Blue Watch firefighter Matt Crawford, aged 35, who has been a firefighter for 11 years, said: "We are excited and proud to be able to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity. We are not nervous because we have trained hard and we know what to expect. We are there as a team and ultimately it is team work that gets anything done in the fire service.

"It is not as easy as you think it is to climb a ladder if you do it over and over again. The group have been exercising together trying to motivate each other."

Mr Crawford explained that they had been preparing for nearly three months both in the gym and on the ladders and every firefighter was doing it on their own time.

To donate to the cause visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hadencross online,

COURT

Teenager accused of rape and murder

A TEENAGE boy accused of raping and murdering a 14-year-old girl found dead in a Wolverhampton park has appeared before Dudley Magistrates Court.

The body of Viktorija Sokolova was discovered in West Park last week.

The 16-year-old suspected of killing her, who can't be named for legal reasons, spoke only to confirm his name, address and date of birth in a five-minute hearing on Monday.

He was remanded in custody and was due to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court this week.

HEALTH

Staff rebel over 'biscuit' uniforms

RUSSELLS Hall Hospital is replacing the uniform of its non-registered health-care staff from blue to 'biscuit'.

Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, says it will help patients tell the difference between registered and non-registered care staff. But it has proved unpopular with some staff who have supported an online petition named Keep Dudley Group Uniform Blue.

RETAIL

£70,000 free parking scheme is launched

A £700,000 car parking scheme has launched. Shoppers across Dudley will now be able to park for two hours free across all council car parks in the borough.

The launch on Monday followed a successful trial of the scheme last year which saw shoppers able to park for the two free hours in Halesowen, Stourbridge and Sedgley from April to August.

INSIDE

WHO'S THE STAR LOT AT AUCTION



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Killer jailed for stabbing sister-in-law



George Mihai - dangerous

A CONVICTED Romanian killer who tried to murder again after being allowed into this country has gone to prison for at least ten years.

George Mihai, aged 38, stabbed his 23-year-old sister-in-law Roxanna Mihai five times in a car park off Lye High Street, just months after arriving in the UK.

Judge Amjad Nawaz told the 'highly volatile' thug: "You are a dangerous man who represents a serious risk of causing serious harm to members of the public."

"Loss of life by those who carry

knives in the recent past has been a cause of grave concern in this country and courts will not hesitate to pass severe sentences."

Mihai was jailed for life and must serve at least 10 years before being considered for parole. The court heard that Mihai had battered a man to death with a piece of wood in his home country in 2004, resulting in seven years behind bars.

Mihai launched the savage attack with a large kitchen knife on his sister-in-law at a bus stop after she interrupted him talking to her husband, his

step-brother Nicursor Gheorghe, from whom he was trying to borrow £5.

Witness Kieran Langan said the defendant, who lived in Park Street, Lye, looked like 'a man possessed' during the assault on August 7 last year.

The knife-wielding attacker has chased the terrified woman, stabbing her five times after she tripped. She was saved when her husband caught up and punched his step-brother in the face.

The defendant has denied attempted murder and possession of an offensive weapon but was convicted for both after a trial.

Thug is jailed after slashing dog's throat

A MAN who cut the throat of a dog during a row with his partner has been jailed.

David Owen held the Staffordshire bull terrier by its muzzle and slashed her throat with a carving knife.

The dog, called Lexi, miraculously survived the ordeal but RSPCA officers said she would have died had the blade gone a millimetre deeper.

Owen, aged 40, of Cole Street, Netherton, was jailed for five months at Birmingham Magistrates' Court over the attack on April 1 last year.

Lexi was left with the serious injury, which had been hastily bandaged, before the RSPCA became aware of the incident. Owen also sliced at the dog's left ear, leaving the tip hanging off.

When Lexi was examined, it was found a main artery in her throat had been missed by just a millimetre. Experts said contact with the artery would have meant her bleeding to death.

Recovery

The terrier has since gone on to make a full recovery and has been re-homed.

RSPCA inspector Steve Morrall said: "It really is amazing that Lexi has made such a fantastic recovery. The injury was serious but against the odds she pulled through."

"If the knife had gone just a tiny bit deeper I would have turned up at Owen's house to find a dog who had bled to death."

"Instead, despite being severely injured and in a bad way, we managed to get her veterinary help in the nick of time."

"Thankfully she survived this horrific ordeal and I'm so pleased that she has been adopted into a very loving family who dote on her."

Owen, who had been found guilty in his absence at an earlier hearing, was banned from keeping animals for life.

New owner Darren Chambers said: "Lexi needed somewhere nice to live so she could realise that not everyone is like the person who hurt her."

Puppies dumped by callous pair



Bonnie and Clyde were dumped in a bush in Kingswinford and the RSPCA want to find those responsible

TWO puppies have been dumped in a bush in Kingswinford.

A member of the public witnessed a man and a woman abandon the puppies in Stallings Lane at around 3.15pm on April 1 - before driving away from the scene in a BMW.

The resident retrieved the pup-

pies and took them home before calling the RSPCA.

The puppies - who staff have now nicknamed Bonnie and Clyde - are being cared for at the RSPCA animal centre in Birmingham.

Vicki Taylor, RSPCA inspector, said: "The puppies are in reasonable health thankfully, but it does

not make any sense at all why they were callously abandoned like this.

"Abandoning animals like this is completely unacceptable. We are just thankful that the dogs were found."

Anyone with information is asked to call the RSPCA on 0300 123 8018.

Parking fee meter stolen at popular beauty spot

THIEVES stole a parking meter from the car park of a popular beauty spot on the rural edge of the Black Country but it was empty of cash.

A gang of four men and a woman were captured on CCTV as a silver Vauxhall Corsa car was used to rip away the machine at Baggeridge Country Park, Sedgley. Police are appealing for information following the incident in Gospel End, which they were called to at around 9am last Wednesday.

No money was inside the machine when it was stolen but its value is said to be worth between £5,000 and £6,000.

Staffordshire councillor Mary Bond said: "All our car parking machines are emptied every day so they contain very little money. However, replacing the machine will involve further loss of income to the council and we now have only one working car parking machine at the car park."

Baggeridge Country Park is very popular with our residents and around 150,000 people use the park every year.

"All of the money generated by parking revenue is reinvested by the council and helps run the park. I'd like to urge anyone who has information about who is responsible to contact the police."

West Midlands Police has asked anyone with information to call 101 quoting incident 139 of April 11.

Elkie gig rejig after losing voice

SINGER Elkie Brooks was forced to postpone her show in the West Midlands last weekend due to laryngitis.

The Lilac Wine star was set to play a greatest hits show at Birmingham Town Hall on Saturday, but was advised not to perform.

Elkie, aged 73, is best known for hits such as Pearl's A Singer, Fool If You Think It's Over, and No More The Fool.

The Salford singer's management stated: "Unfortunately, due to laryngitis, Elkie has been advised to rest her voice and is unable to perform at the Town Hall this weekend. She sends her sincere apologies and looks forward to being back on stage on the revised date."

Her show will now take place at the same venue on May 10. Tickets will be valid for the new date.

Golf charity links

A GOLF club will give a helping hand to families through its new charity of the year.

Hagley Golf Club has joined forces with Blackheath-based charity Loaves 'N' Fishes to help struggling families get back on track.

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Velodrome dismay for cyclists ahead of Games

A DECISION not to build a new velodrome for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022 has caused consternation among cycling enthusiasts.

It now seems likely that Birmingham and the Black Country's games will see cycling events taking place in London, despite the region's long and proud cycling heritage.

David Viner, a trustee at Halesowen Cycling and Athletic Club, said the £70 million investment in the Alexander Stadium announced by Prime Minister Theresa May last week showed there could be money made available for a velodrome.

A multi-million pound aquatics centre is also being built in Smethwick to host swimming and diving events in four years' time.

The countdown for the Birmingham Games started on Sunday with a handover event seen by a TV audience of millions as the 2018 Games on Australia's Gold Coast drew to a close.

Mr Viner said: "Following on from £60m being spent on the new swimming pool - another great legacy from 2022 - it is interesting to hear people like Mayor Street say there is not enough money to build a velodrome."

Black Country cycling legend Hugh Porter is among those who have called for the West Midlands to have its own velodrome for the competition.

Sir Lenny and the wolf in concert

SIR Lenny Henry will be narrating Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf in a performance at a prestigious West Midlands concert venue next month.

The Dudley-born actor and comedian, who is also Chancellor of Birmingham City University, will join the conductor Christopher Houlling and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Pops Orchestra for the concert on May 4. It is at the £57 million Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, run by Birmingham City University.

The date is special for Star Wars fans and music from the hit movies will also feature.

Tickets cost £22 adults and £15 concessions. Visit www.bcu.ac.uk/conservatoire/events-calendar/lenny-henry-peter-and-the-wolf

Appeal to family

THE coroner's office is trying to find family of a man found dead at an address in Dudley. Graham Cooper, 69, was discovered in Butterfield Court, Short Street, on April 9. Contact Wendy Plummer on 0121 569 6990.

Geopark status is goal for new officer



Liz Etheridge - new role

A LIFELONG love of rocks and fossils has led Liz Etheridge to her new role at Dudley's geopark officer as Dudley Council bid for Unesco Global Geopark status for the Black Country.

Having lived in the region most of her life and having studied geology at Birmingham University, Liz has a wealth of knowledge and experience, which she has since developed in roles with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Wychavon District Council.

She will now dedicate her time to addressing the recommendations set out by Unesco and support efforts to gain the

geopark international status. She will work with volunteers and Black Country partners to strengthen the connections across all 45 sites which make up the area's proposed geopark.

Liz said: "My love of geology has stemmed from childhood. I was always curious about rocks and where they came from, and when I realised that studying geology would bring together all the things I loved, I knew it was a career I wanted to pursue."

"I've lived in the Black Country almost all my life and I'm passionate about promoting this area's geological heritage

and how it has influenced so much of our industry and culture. I knew this was a fantastic opportunity and the perfect job for me and I am thrilled to have the honour of working alongside colleagues, volunteers and the public as we bid for Unesco status."

"Achieving Global Geopark status will make sure that the Black Country's precious geological, industrial and natural heritage sites are protected and respected."

"It's such an exciting time to join the geopark team and I am keen to make sure that we successfully deliver the Unesco recommendations"

Hospice call on public to help raise final £1m

A HOSPICE is appealing for help in raising the final £1 million required to build a new day services unit, which will see an extra 40 families supported every week.

Having raised £2.5m through major grants and the use of reserves, Mary Stevens Hospice staff, based in Stourbridge, are asking the public to help their final target of £3.5m.

To launch the campaign, Lesley Sidaway, one of the Hagley Road hospice's day service users, has spoken to help raise awareness of vital project.

As well as allowing the hospice to open its doors to 40 new families, the extension would also include new treatment rooms, state-of-the-art facilities and an on-site family apartment.

Lesley said: "I can never truly tell the people who care for me here how grateful I am for the support I and my family receive."

Battling

"I know how lucky I have been to come here so regularly to spend a day with people who have become close friends, and a team of angels looking over me."

"My days at the hospice are some of the memories I most look forward to making, and everyone battling a life-limiting illness should have the opportunity to receive care, love and support. We, as a community, need this hospice, and now they need us."

Charlotte Schofield, head of fundraising and lottery at Mary Stevens, added: "The care we provide in times of need for families simply wouldn't be possible without the support we have received from our community over the last 25 years."

"However, in the last five years, we have been full to capacity in our day services unit every single day, which means there are families out there in our community who would benefit from our care and simply can't access it at the moment. This expansion will ensure that we can care for more families when they need us."

To donate call (01384) 377778.

Now we're really cooking on gas



Former Goodyear workers Wayne Devaney and Paul Baugh with assistant kitchen supervisor Janette Cottam

IT'S 'ready, steady, cook' at a community hub and cafe which is now able to serve up hot meals thanks to a generous donation.

The Age UK Dudley centre in Ettymore Road, Sedgley has been presented with a new cooker by the former Goodyear workers.

The centre aims to combat lone-

liness by providing a welcoming place for older people to socialise, shop and have a bite to eat.

The commercial cooker, which will allow the charity to provide more hot meals, was funded by the Goodyear workers' 5/344 Transport and General Workers Union Benevolent Fund.

Staff will now be able to offer a 'reasonably priced' hot meal every day rather than a limited choice of sandwiches and jacket potatoes.

A presentation took place at the centre as staff tried out their new kitchen appliance, which cost £1,475.98, to hand out free bacon rolls and hot drinks.

NEWS IN BRIEF

More than 380 empty homes

A TOTAL of 387 council-owned homes are empty in Dudley despite hundreds of families struggle to find somewhere to live.

The Dudley figure is higher than Wolverhampton (168), Sandwell (169) and Walsall (90). However, the number of vacant Dudley Council properties is considerably fewer than April last year, when the figure was 617.

Alan Lunt, Dudley's deputy chief executive, said: "The majority of homes owned by Dudley Council that are currently empty are either already allocated to prospective tenants, being advertised, or shortlisting from more than one interested applicant."

April showers to help charities

A CHARITY shop team is all set to host a fundraising event tomorrow (Friday) in Dudley.

Members of the A.R.C.A.I.D store in Dudley will hold their Little April Showers event at The Royal British Legion club on Ruiton Street in Lower Gornal, at 7.30pm. It costs £6.

The sale of raffle tickets will help raise funds for Mesothelioma UK, the Mick Knighton Mesothelioma Research Fund and Asbestos Support West Midlands. For tickets call (01384) 457879 or in evenings (01384) 442266.

Bus firm profits are just the ticket

BLACK Country-based bus and coach operator Rotala, which includes Diamond Bus, has reported rises in both profits and turnover for its latest financial year.

Adjusted pre-tax profit was up by 20 per cent to £3.22 million on turnover which grew five per cent to £57.9m for the year to the end of November. The Tivdale-based business bought three companies during the year to expand operations in the West Midlands, the North West and at Heathrow airport. They included Hansons (Wordsley) for £608,000.

Friends seek help for stall on nature trail

THE Friends of Wren's Nest Nature Reserve will be staffing a refreshments and information stall on the Dudley Borough Trail route.

It will be there for walkers taking part in the event on May 6 at the Wren's Nest beauty spot from 11am to 3.30pm. The group is seeking volunteers.

A new flagpole has been put up, paid for by the friends, to fly the Green Flag awarded to the reserve.

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Metro numbers 'balancing out'

BOSSES at Midland Metro have said passenger numbers had started to 'balance out', after a drop in January – particularly on weekends.

Sophie Allison, Metro operations manager, said the figures were starting to come back to where they expect at last week's West Midlands Combined Authority's Transport Delivery Committee meeting.

The figures showed that the network saw a nine per cent fall in travelling customers in January 2018, compared to the same month in 2017. Passenger numbers were at 597,326 in January, compared to 653,085 12 months previously.

Homes demand in 7th monthly fall

BUYER demand for housing in the West Midlands continues to fall, new data reveals.

The RICS UK Residential Market survey reports buyer demand has dropped for the seventh consecutive month in the region. It revealed one of the main reasons was a lack of fresh stock coming onto the West Midlands' market, alongside ongoing concerns over affordability as house prices continued to rise.

Average stock levels on estate agents' books remains near an all-time low as the number of houses being put up for sale fell for the 30th consecutive month.

Push the Boat Out and try sailing

SAILORS can test their skills on the water next month. The Royal Yachting Association's Push the Boat Out scheme will allow novices to try sailing and windsurfing for free throughout May.

Events will be held at Himley Hall Sailing Club, Sandwell Valley Sailing Club, Dudley Sailing Club, Aldridge Sailing Club, Walsall's The Chase Sailing Club, South Staffordshire Sailing Club and Penkridge's Greensforge Sailing Club.

Entries invited for canalside exhibition

DUDLEY Canal and Tunnel Trust is holding its second open display of art and photography.

Entries are invited for the exhibition that will be held in the Waterside Gallery at The Portal, Birmingham New Road, from July 16 to September 16. It is open to all ages or abilities for art works in any kind of media as long as they can be wall mounted. The deadline is June 30. See dudleycanaltrust.org.uk/open-exhibition-2018/

Plea for council to act over blue badge

BLUE badge holders are concerned that parking privileges have been lost to many disabled motorists and their family members.

One parent, whose son lost his blue badge after 12 years following a national review of the system, is calling for Dudley Council to act now.

A number of blue badge holders lost out when those who qualified under Disability Living Allowance rules

were moved over to the new Personal Independent Payment.

Michael Hands' son Phillip, aged 29, who has severe mental impairment, epilepsy and autism could not renew the badge used to help him under the new rules in December.

A High Court judgement has since ruled against the Government which is in the process of reviewing its guidelines.

When Mr Hands went to Dudley Council to re-apply, he was told he would have to wait until the change was ratified by Parliament.

The retired care manager, of Word-sley, said: "I've studied the guidelines and it clearly states that local councils can decide on a case-by-case basis and they have autonomy to make that decision. We're asking them to be compassionate and let us have the badge

back now. Our son is 6ft tall with the mental capacity of a four-year-old and needs someone to hold his hand at all times when he's out."

UKIP councillor Paul Brothwood tried to bring in an immediate temporary renewal. The authority has instead agreed to hold talks.

Mr Hands, 59, added: "Discussion on the issue could take months. In the meantime my son's safety is at risk."

First Doctor Who script up for sale at auction

A PIECE of television history – a copy of the first ever Doctor Who script – is going under the hammer in Dudley.

The stained and slightly battered type-written artefact belonged to actor William Hartnell, the original Time Lord.

It covers the first episode, An Unearthly Child, of the first adventure, Doctor Who and the Tribe of Gum.

The prized memento goes to auction in Dudley as part of a film and music memorabilia sale on May 3, and is estimated to fetch up to £8,000.

Written by Anthony Coburn, it was first broadcast by the BBC on November 23, 1963, and introduced Hartnell as the first Doctor.

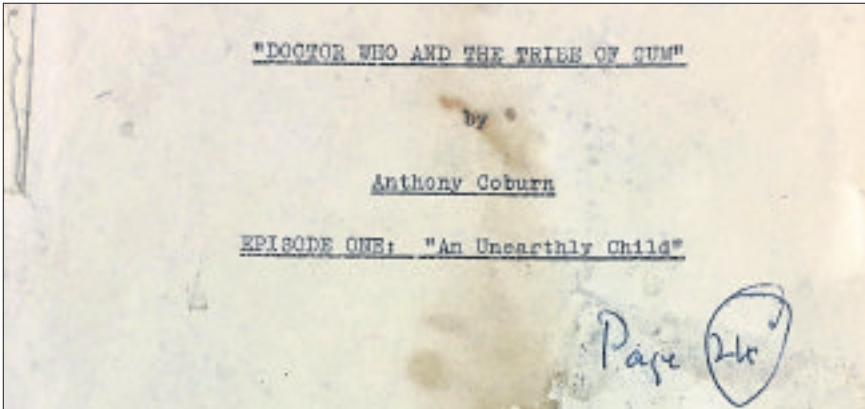
In the first episode, which was screened the day after President Kennedy was assassinated, Carole Ann Ford played the Doctor's young companion, Susan. Her unusual behaviour becomes the focus of concern by two of her school-teachers, played by Jacqueline Hill and William Russell, who enter a police phone box after hearing Susan's voice. Inside they are amazed to find a large room. The Doctor, fearing they will give away the secret of his time-travelling spacecraft in disguise, takes them to the Stone Age.

The 43-page script, complete with pencil annotations by Hartnell, was discovered by the vendor's grandfather, a builder, while refurbishing Hartnell's flat in East Sussex, and was among items to be thrown out.

Expert Chris Yeo, who inspected the script on TV's Antiques Roadshow, said: "This is the DNA of Doctor Who, the genesis of the programme, it's a very, very important thing."

The thirteenth Doctor made her debut in the closing moments of Twice Upon a Time, the 2017 Christmas special, when the public got their first glimpse of Jodie Whittaker, the first female incarnation of the iconic sci-fi character.

The script will be sold at Aston's Auctioneer's at Baylies Hall in Tower Street.



A piece of TV history – the title page of the script for the first ever episode of Doctor Who



The first Doctor Who, William Hartnell, in 1963



Stars Jacqueline Hill, Carole Ann Ford and William Russell

Merry Hill Carpetright store marked for closure

STRUGGLING retailer Carpetright is closing its branch at the Merry Hill shopping centre amid plans to axe hundreds of jobs across the country.

The firm has unveiled plans to shut 81 shops – including the Merry Hill shop – under a sweeping restructure that will see 300 job roles lost.

Neighbouring stores in Oldbury and Wolverhampton are not affected. The chain said 92 sites had been earmarked for closure from the end of September, although 11 have already stopped trading.

Rent on another 113 is set to be cut under proposals being put to landlords. It said it hopes to relocate staff where possible.

The group – which employs nearly 2,700 staff in total at 409 sites – also confirmed an investor cash-call to raise around £60 million through a rights issue to put the company on a firmer financial footing.

The details came as it revealed a 'technical breach' of its banking arrangements.

Carpetright chief Wilf Walsh said: "These tough but necessary actions will enable us to address the burden of a legacy UK property estate consisting of too many poorly located stores on unsustainable rents, and are essential if we are to restore our profitability and deliver a successful turnaround. We will remain in close contact with all colleagues to keep them fully informed as we move through this process."

Carpetright said planned closures would not affect customers, with all orders to be fulfilled.

More than 7,000 vaccinations boost

MORE than 7,000 tetanus vaccines have been donated to Unicef from local NHS trusts to help save the lives of thousands of children.

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust pledged to donate 10 life-saving tetanus vaccinations for every single flu vaccine given to staff who work there.

More than 70 per cent of frontline healthcare staff at the trust got their flu jab this year after they were encouraged to do so to protect themselves and their patients from flu, but also to help save the lives of children around the world who will benefit from receiving essential tetanus vaccinations.

Mark Axcell, chief executive officer, said getting the flu had not only protected staff and those around them but many young children without access to healthcare.

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More than 20 are caught speeding

A TOTAL of 21 drivers were caught speeding during a police operation in Dudley.

The motorists were caught on Tuesday, April 10, exceeding the speed limit on Gospel End Road in Sedgley, which has a 30mph limit. Wombourne Police tweeted: "Speed checks carried out Gospel End Road this afternoon. A massive 21 x drivers exceeding the limit by 5mph or more. Highest recorded speed 41mph. All due to receive a letter in the post."

"A shame one vehicle decided to drive past shouting abuse. We will decline your kind advice to 'get a real job'."

Set out stall for under-5s' big day

STALLHOLDERS have been encouraged to take part in an annual under-5s day later this summer.

The popular Dudley Council event will be held at Himley Hall and Park on June 29. It features activities and entertainment for children under the age of five, and regularly attracts more than 4,000 visitors.

Organisations and businesses offering products relating to children such as toys, clothing and information stalls can apply for a stand, visit www.himleyhallandpark.co.uk/under5s or email jacki.wynn@dudley.gov.uk

Bowls club to host open day

A BOWLS club is hosting its annual open day this weekend at a Stourbridge park.

Crystal Bowls is hosting the event on Saturday at Wollescote Park.

The green in Wollescote Road will be open from 11am to 4pm. Visitors are welcome to have a go, so long as they are wearing flat shoes or trainers. Refreshments will be provided for guests on the day and people of all ages are welcome to try the game.

For further details on the open day or on the bowls club contact the club on (01384) 371106.

Puppet theatre stage story of Snow White

A TOURING puppet theatre company will be bringing Snow White to an arts centre in the Black Country. Angel Heart Theatre will present their show at Glasshouse Arts Centre in Amblecote. The performance, which has been selected by students at the Glasshouse College as part of Black Country Touring's Young Promoter Scheme, is at 5pm tomorrow (Friday). Tickets cost £6 and admission is free for under-fives. Call (01384) 399433.

House lease proposal is key part of heritage bid

AN HISTORIC Black Country house dating back over a century could be leased out as part of a £1.5 million revamp to a park, under proposals.

Tintern House in Stevens Park, Quarry Bank, will be leased out to the Emily Jordan Foundation, under plans being considered by Dudley Council this week.

A decision will be made by the council's Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee.

Councillor David Sparks, who is chairman of Stevens Park Friends Group, said: "We are in the process of finalising a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funds to refurbish the house and park. This is part of the process."

"With the council the foundation from Kidderminster and the friends of the park of Quarry Bank Park will be putting forward a final bid later in the year."

"Tintern House will be used by the council, the foundation and the community and this is a fantastic asset to the park and Quarry Bank."

"It is one of the oldest buildings in Quarry Bank and certainly in the area," he added. "The park was opened in the 1920s and the building was there before then."

The house will be leased out as part of the Stevens Park, Quarry Bank Restoration Project. Campaigners are lining up a bid to the HLF in August.

Local history on internet project

AN archives group is looking to gather the history of Sedgley and Gornal together in one place on the web so it can be accessed by historians across the globe.

The Sedgley Archives Project will launch a website in a bid to make historical maps, photos, documents and press cuttings available to the public.

It will also see audio interviews about shops archived and accessible.

A meeting of the group will take place to discuss the project at Cafe Cappella in Gospel End Street, Sedgley, on May 28 at 11am.

Martin Jones, project co-ordinator, said the aim was to enable people to upload items of interest about the area wherever they happened to live.

Culture Club gig

BOY George and Culture Club will play in Birmingham as part of a comeback tour. The iconic 80s band best known for Karma Chameleon and Do You Really Want To Hurt Me will play Arena Birmingham on November 16.

Firm first to benefit from 'engine' fund



Direct Digital Controls directors Ian Lamb, Bob Horton and Bob Taylor

A FIRM in the Black Country has become one of the first to benefit from a £250 million investment fund for Midlands businesses.

The Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) was launched last month to give small and medium-sized companies greater access to vital finance so they can grow and create jobs.

Building energy and environmental control firm Direct Digital Controls, of Brierley Hill, is one of the first businesses to receive finance from the fund.

It won help expand its wired and lighting control division. Direct Digital Controls previously sub-contacted this work and the funding has enabled it to set up its own division by taking on four new employees and also training an apprentice.

The small business loans investment from MEIF will help the company specialise in a number of key business sectors.

Direct Digital Controls plans and fits its customers' buildings with environmentally friendly and cost-efficient energy systems. Alongside this,

the firm offers a monitoring service that ensures its customers' systems keep operating at peak efficiency.

Turned down by traditional lenders, the company secured a packaging of funding through MEIF that has been delivered by the fund's West Midlands small business loans fund manager, Wolverhampton-based BCRS Business Loans. Bob Taylor, director at Direct Digital Controls, said: "Securing finance from BCRS Business Loans and the Midlands Engine Investment Fund is a pivotal step in the future of our business growth."

Cabinet minister praises money-making council

MICHAEL Gove urged local authorities to adopt a 'money-making' approach to their operations during his whistle-stop tour of the Black Country.

The Environment Secretary said that by becoming more business-like, councils could raise the funds required to enable them to provide a high level of public services while also keeping council tax down.

The leading Brexiteer also poured scorn on claims Britain's environment would suffer after it leaves the European Union, insisting that 'green' levels would be 'enhanced and protected'.

Mr Gove visited Dudley Council's Lister Road Depot, which employs 450 staff in environmental services including street cleansing, bin collections and lighting.

The Conservative-led authority is exploring ways to make the centre commercially viable, and also offers an MOT service there.

Impressed

"I've been impressed by everything I have seen here and it reflects incredibly well on the council staff," said Mr Gove, who spent time chatting with workers and bosses during a tour of the sprawling site.

"You have an entrepreneurial council that as well as producing a high-quality service in terms of waste disposal and traffic management and road repairs, is also earning money by providing, for example, MOT services."

"I think that combination of a high level of public services and a business-like, money-making approach to making sure residents can be served better helps to keep council tax down and also helps to maintain the high quality of services that taxpayers have a right to expect."

Mr Gove also responded to concerns raised by Labour that leaving the EU could damage Britain's environment as the nation ditched EU regulations.

He said: "Outside the EU we are going to make sure that our environment is enhanced and protected. We believe in a greener Britain."

Mr Gove visited the site with Dudley Council leader Councillor Patrick Harley, Councillor Karen Shakespeare and Tory candidate for the upcoming election in St Thomas' ward, Jonathan Elliott.



Michael Gove looked at recycling facilities during his visit to Dudley Council's Lister Road Depot

Nine fewer shops in town centre

DUDLEY town centre ended 2017 with nine fewer shops than at the beginning of the year, according to a new study.

Research by the Local Data Company for PwC has found four shops opened up in the town centre in 2017 but 13 closed.

That was the worst perfor-

mance of any town centres in the Black Country.

Stourbridge had no shops open and three close, Wolverhampton ended 2017 with two fewer shops than it started with.

Councillor Ken Finch said: "It is a disappointment for any area when shops are closing, but

Dudley is not unique in this. As a council we're trying our best to get established businesses to come here, but it's very difficult.

"I honestly think with the Midland Metro extension coming and all the tourist attractions we've got, things will improve."

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Sour note as speed bumps go musical

NOW this is what you call traffic management. In an attempt to get motorists to stick to the speed limit, local bigwigs representing Jelsum in the Netherlands had the bright idea of installing musical rumble strips along the road into the village.

When cars drive over the strips at the correct speed of 40mph, sensors in the road activate chimes which reward the driver by playing the Friesland provincial anthem. You don't think they had been smoking anything unusual before the meeting, do you?

Still, it sounds a sight more fun than the infuriating speed humps, barriers, chicanes and white paint we get in this country. However, it does not seem to be music to the ears of residents, who complained of being kept awake by the continuous droning which travels right the way through the village.

One resident complained of artistic taxi drivers going back and forth all night at varying speeds to produce their own arrangements.

"Last Saturday night the taxis were driving from Leeuwarden to Stiens and on the way back, they tried to go across the lines as quickly as possible and we had the anthem playing all night at high speed," said one.

Some people will complain about anything, won't they? They ought to try living along some of our country lanes, where drivers crash over the massive potholes day and night. Not nearly so tenuous.

□ □ □

AFTER years in the wilderness, it looks like the Black Country could soon be back on the national railway map. Well sort of. Seven new stations are being considered for the West Midlands, including the re-opening of Darlaston and Willenhall stations. This sounds like great news.

I do worry about plans for a new service linking Wolverhampton to the Merry Hill shopping centre, though, with no mention whatsoever of a stop at Dudley along the way. Town centres have it tough enough as it is, without giving Wulfrunians an easy route to an out-of-town shopping centre. I fear that can only suck more life out of the city. And if you are going to create this service, why wouldn't you have a station in Dudley, next to the zoo, Black Country Museum and, dare we say it, the Hippodrome theatre? So much for creating a major tourist zone.

Interestingly, while Dudley Zoo appears to have been overlooked, rail chiefs are keen to provide a service to West Midland Safari Park. So, you get off the train, pay your admission, and walk straight into the lion enclosure. Remind me to bring my camcorder.

'Men deserts' – where young boys lack role models



Eric Bristow – achieved an unexpected immortality 8,000 miles away



Peter Kay – no leak on what was the unforeseen family circumstances



David Lammy – Tottenham MP, was understandably emotional over death toll rise

Rising death toll and the absent fathers

AS the death toll rises on London's streets, the commonest cry is "Where are you?" David Lammy, the black MP for Tottenham, was understandably emotional as he yelled: "Why is there a political vacuum? Where is the Prime Minister? Where is the Home Secretary? Where is Sadiq Khan?" A street demo took up the cry for the guilty missing: "Where are the police, where are the pastors?" And yet no-one shouted the most crucial question of all. Where are the fathers?

TIME after time, academic studies of gang culture in black communities highlight the huge numbers of absent fathers. Some neighbourhoods are dubbed "men deserts" because most households are run by a woman and young black boys have no role models in the home. David Lammy knows all about it; his own father walked out on the family and fled to America. Why are politicians so reluctant to mention this issue? Probably because they are instantly howled down and accused of attacking, undermining and disrespecting single mothers. But as Lammy wrote in the Daily Telegraph six years ago: "Many single mothers do a heroic job looking after their families . . . but it becomes twice as hard to set boundaries with half the number of parents." And while more cops, more pastors and more interest from politicians might help London's crisis, it is hard to see any end to the carnage when so many dads are missing and no-one is setting any boundaries.

I WROTE recently ago about my Saturday job as a 15-year-old mechanic's mate. Jim the mechanic taught me a lesson which has stood me in good stead. It is this: if you dismantle something and then reassemble it, there will always be a few bits left over. I hope this brings some

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



comfort to those of you who, as spring arrives, have been trying to fix the lawnmower.

I THOUGHT the public sector was being educated to address people correctly. A reader tells me he has a relative in hospital in East Anglia. Every time he telephones the place he is greeted with "Allo, moi luvverly."

YOU may think we live in a world where the all-prying internet lays bare all our deepest secrets. Is nothing confidential any more? And then you think of Peter Kay, currently launching the third and final series of Car Share. In December last year Kay suddenly announced: "Due to unforeseen family circumstances, I deeply regret that I am having to cancel all of my upcoming work projects." And from that day to this no-one has discovered what the unforeseen family circumstances were. Not a leak, not a peep. Extraordinary.

TALKING of which, here's a new advert: It's the deadliest nerve agent ever invented! It penetrates the latest protective suits! A single drop can kill an entire army in seconds! Especially effective against old Russians and their daughters! Novichok - it doesn't do exactly what it says on the tin.

THE Salisbury incident is turning into a sort of test of patriotism. If you believe the official government line, then you are a good egg. If you happen to think, like Mr Corbyn and me,

that the speculation and accusations should not have raced ahead of the hard evidence, you are a 'useful idiot' doing the Kremlin's work. I am expecting a sackful of roubles any day now.

A SURVEY by a mineral-water company suggests mosts Brits are stuck in a Groundhog Day existence, endlessly repeating the same conversations, same breakfasts, same dinner, same holiday destinations, same advice to children, and so on. But what has any of this to do with bottled water? A spokeswoman for the company declares: "We're all naturally driven to make the most of every day and being properly hydrated helps us get there." Advertising – same old cobbler.

ERIC Bristow has died far too soon but the darts legend may have achieved an unexpected immortality 8,000 miles away. In the Falkland Islands, the helicopters used by civilians and UK military in the years after the 1982 war were provided by the aviation company Bristow. Inevitably, the squaddies called the helicopters Eric's and, all these years later, the term is still in use.

JEREMY Clarkson tells the story of a lad who was horrified to find so many deductions from his first wage packet. It was explained that this money was taken to pay for hospital, schools and so on. The boy accepted it stoically. But the next week, when his second wage packet arrived, he rang home in despair: "Mum - they've done it again."

MICE have reappeared in our house, the garden is full of rabbits, a pheasant has built a nest under one window and the other night a rat wandered across the yard. What has changed? It is six weeks since our old tabby cat died.

TALKING POINT



Response to the bad weather is – panic!

WITH temperatures creeping up, daffodils out and a promise that spring might actually be here, it is time to reflect on this miserable wintertime.

Snow, wind, rain, floods we have had it all. So what have we learnt during these bleak winter days? Personally, I have discovered the following 10 things:

1 There is a Beast of the East. He has rarely troubled us in the past but after the first rampage he got a taste for mayhem and misery and decided to come back and the mini beasts were also fearsome.

2 There are different kinds of snow. Apparently you can have 3ft of snow in the back garden but may not be able to build a decent snowman. Snow from the east seems to be very fine.

3 Our country is no longer equipped to deal with rain or thawing snow. Any persistent rain will lead to flood alerts and sewage floating into someone's back garden.

4 Britain's roads are in no state to handle bad weather. Whatever the weather may bring over winter we can be sure that we will be left with roads resembling the surface of the Moon. And there is nothing a pothole loves more than a puddle to hide in.

5 Despite snow, black ice or flood water there will always be one arrogant motorist who will drive at the speed limit – at a minimum – because a bit of bad weather isn't going to stop them. This persists even if it means they are driving so close that they are forcing you out of the narrow snow tracks while they overtake, or your car is drowned as they steam through flood waters.

6 In snow, black ice or flood water there will always be one terrified driver who should not have left the house and is clutching the steering wheel in fear, barely clocking up 10mph. This means you are struggling to maintain a braking distance and are forced out of the narrow snow tracks or into a deeper part of the puddle to overtake.

7 It does not actually have to snow for schools to shut, the mere threat is enough for the circulation of 'school closure' texts. And don't assume just because the teachers have made it in that your children will be allowed to stay in school.

8 The slightest incline that you have never even noticed before becomes equivalent to the Eiger for any HGVs or buses when covered in snow/ice.

9 HGVs and buses should not go out when roads are covered in snow and particularly not in hilly Staffordshire

10 However much warning we are given there will only ever be one response from us Brits - panic!

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Why destroy 'our' Dudley Hippodrome?

I WOULD like to know why Dudley Council (the self-proclaimed historical capital of the Black Country) want to pull down, to destroy and demolish our Dudley Hippodrome.

It really makes no sense at all and I have never had an answer as to why they intend to do it.

Our Dudley Hippodrome is the last remaining lyric theatre designed by the renowned Archibald Hurley Robinson who drew up the plans and commissioned local suppliers and contractors wherever possible.

Baggeridge bricks were used on the

massive walls of the building. It was built to hold more than 1,700 patrons and to this day the acoustics and theatrical feel it has inside is quite breathtaking and wonderful.

Sadly none of the Dudley councillors have ever been inside.

I am a member of Dudley Hippodrome Community Group and we are continuing to fight against the destruction of our Dudley Hippodrome and are determined to find out why the land that it occupies is needed. What for and for how long has Dudley Council had these plans in view?

This issue is causing concern as we like our council to be open and transparent.

At our local community forum in Kingswinford, I was prevented from bringing up anything on our Dudley Hippodrome as it was a 'Dudley' matter. What is the council afraid of? What haven't we been told and why?

Hoping that this letter may shed some light on the matter and that our local paper can take an interest in this very important decision.

MARLENE WATSON
Wall Heath

It took MPs 30 years to catch on

IT'S so nice to see that our MPs are keeping their eye on the ball, not much is getting past them.

When they see a problem they react and demand change, they always put their constituents first, if they see a wrong they make it right.

Now they have discovered that petrol stations are ripping us off at motorway service areas.

Can I just say that any motorist could have told these MPs the same thing anytime in the last 30 to 40 years!

I can't believe how quick they are.

Just in case another 30 to 40 years go by can I also tell them we are being ripped off over council tax, electric, gas and water bills, train fares, car tax, car and home insurance, interest rates, food, HS2, to name but a few.

But Well done for spotting the petrol price.

PETE LOWE
Brierley Hill

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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Focus on the causes of drug addiction

COUNCILLOR Harley's simplistic reason for the rise in drug addiction in Dudley rests upon his argument that 'hard drugs are becoming socially acceptable'. He concludes that the only way to eradicate the problem is a war on drugs.

Drug abuse has a complexity of causes. Signalling out one feature in any individual is unhelpful. Attention has to focus on factors such as a history of mental illness, stress, having a poor social and economic background, experimenting with drugs and poor parental supervision.

To ignore the causes is to ignore how the problem can rationally be dealt with.

EDWARD DAVIES
Stourbridge

Region's rail policy 'stupidity'

HOW is it that patriotic, flag waving Great Britain is buying foreign built 'bus on rails' trams - at ten times the price of a double decker bus - to wreck any possibility of our British built hydrogen-electric trains completing the 120km Black Country railway? This means slow, frequent stopping trams preventing forever the train that, last year, we sold to Germany - 14 British hydrogen electric trains are now in use in Lower Saxony.

Turning a 120km railway 'of national strategic significance' (Network Rail/DfT) into a piddling little tram line of 6.7km is the ultimate stupidity. Because of devolution, it seems central Government are powerless to stop the idiocy of the W Midlands Combined Authority, the incompetence of Mayor Andy Street and his transport lead, Cllr Roger Lawrence. Both should go - now.

TIM WELLER
Halesowen

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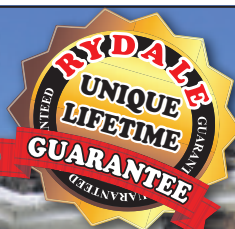
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£1m Faberge flower stuns TV antiques expert



Colonel Stamford J Cartwright MBE with the £1m Faberge flower which stunned the BBC TV Antiques Roadshow

A RARE Faberge flower valued at £1 million was the star find of TV's Antiques Roadshow on Sunday.

An expert was stunned by the intricate piece of jewellery in the programme, which was recorded at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley last year.

The jewel was gifted to the Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars in 1904 by the Countess of Dudley, the wife of

Lord Dudley, the Second in Command of the Regiment, on the soldiers' return to the Midlands from the Boer War in South Africa.

The five-inch pear blossom ornament set in rock crystal, with gold, silver and diamonds, is one of only three items to be valued at £1m in the Antiques Roadshow's 40-year history.

Antiques Roadshow's jewellery expert Geoffrey Munn described it as 'the rarest, most poetic manifestation of Faberge's work that one could ever hope to see'.

The Faberge flower is owned by the Worcestershire Yeomanry Museum Charitable Trust.

Stamford Cartwright MBE, Honorary Colonel of the Royal Yeomanry's B Squadron, said: "It was gifted to mark that first occasion they were deployed overseas. They were each given a sprig of pear blossom to wear on their hats - reminding them of the county they were leaving."

"In the 1990s it was valued at just over £50,000 - so it has gone up a lot over the last 20 or so years."

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Go to the Park side for Star Wars exhibition

FAMILIES can take a trip to a galaxy far, far away at Himley Hall and Park's new Lego exhibition.

Visitors can feel the force at the Star Wars-themed Amor Lego display, which runs until Sunday, September 30.

Admission is free for both adults and children. Star Wars fans can view a series of displays which include an Ewok village, space station, desert and ice plateau staged with figures and vehicles. Lego versions of gunships, including the Imperial Star Destroyer and Millennium Falcon, a Sandcrawler, AT-AT Walkers and Jabba the Hut's Palace are also all featured.

Posters

Individual Lego figures include popular characters from the films such as Jabba the Hut, Bobba Fett, Han Solo, Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, Chewbacca, Obi-Wan Kenobi, C3-PO and R2-D2 – plus a range of Storm Troopers, Droids and Ewoks.

Models made out of Lego include Yoda, a life-size Darth Maul head and a range of vehicles, including the Death Star. A range of light sabres and official Lego posters are also on display.

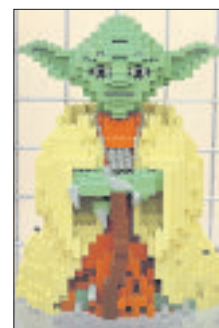
Families visiting the exhibition will also be able to see other items from the technics and creator Lego ranges such as the Sydney Opera House.

Dudley Council said it is delighted to offer the new exhibition, which it hopes will prove interesting for all age groups across the Black Country.

Alan Lunt, Dudley Council's strategic director for place, said: "We are delighted to be able to offer this wonderful exhibition, which will prove interesting to children and adults of



Check out the Y Wing starfighter



An early Lego Yoda



Himley Hall catering manager Lisa Guest with R2-D2

all ages. I am sure visitors will have fun identifying the Lego versions of their favourite characters and can try out the new coffee lounge at the same time."

Two further exhibitions will also be

on display in the Oak Gallery at Himley Hall until Saturday, July 8 – a 40-year retrospective of the painter Ron Satterthwaite and a Wildlife Wander around the World featuring a range of wildlife paintings by David Spencer.

Spring SPECIALS



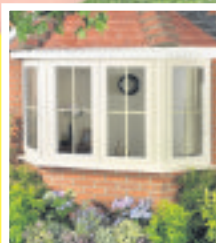
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She's got style! Gia wins catwalk award



Gia in the swimsuit that helped her win the Personal Style Award – picture by Colin Chau/TOP MODEL

A GLAMOROUS teenager has beaten the bullies once and for all by winning a modelling award – dazzling judges on the catwalk with a sequinned swimsuit.

Gia Lawrence-Harish, a photography student at Dudley College, said she was 'unbelievably happy' to win the Personal Style Award at the Top Model 2018 awards.

The 17-year-old, from Aspen Way, Wolverhampton, was selected for the finals back in January out of thousands of other hopefuls, all eager to strut their stuff in a bid to win the crown.

And despite not having won the competition overall, Gia was singled out for a rare, personal award after donning a jaw-dropping scarlet, sequinned swimsuit – complete with a unique hood.

Gia said: "I was really happy – I'm still reeling really. There were so many girls there, all who had portfolios and so much experience. So when I was called up for the Personal Style Award I was really shocked.

Designed

Gia stunned judges on the catwalk by showing off a Dolls of Decadence swimsuit, designed by Birmingham-based Paulinah Nkechinyere Eboh-Sampson. Her mother Dawn said: "I was so proud, Gia looked fabulous. The show was just brilliant and it was such a good experience for her."

Gia started modelling when she was just 15-years-old and said it worked wonders in boosting her confidence.

She admitted she suffered from being bullied when she was younger, adding: "But modelling has really helped that. It's given me confidence."

As part of the competition, the participants were also tasked with raising money for charity. Gia opted for Children with Cancer UK and managed to gather more than £800 overall.

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Mayor calls for green energy initiative to boost business

A MULTI-MILLION pound green energy zone that will lower household bills and boost businesses has been proposed for the Black Country.

A report has called for four Energy Innovation Zones (EIZs) in the West Midlands, with sites at Dudley, Darlaston and Wolverhampton under consideration.

The zones will be tasked with providing a cheaper and plentiful power supply for industry and homes, and cutting air pollution. The development of new energy supplies has been described as 'crucial' by West Midlands Mayor Andy Street, who is pushing for Government funding to get EIZs off the ground.

He says that the region will eventually become reliant on green energy to stave off capacity problems, and needs its own sources to enable businesses to flourish.

Recruit will be dedicated to the Edge

A VACANCY has arisen for someone to become closely involved with a popular tourist attraction and help advise the National Trust on its upkeep.

The Kinver Edge committee is looking for a new member, who must be committed to Kinver Edge and be happy to become part of a friendly and dedicated team.

Whoever applies for the vacant seat will need to seek the best for the future of the area, which provides stunning views over the Black Country and the Shropshire Hills.

The committee meets up to five times a year and anyone wanting to apply is asked to write to John Sharkey, Kinver Edge Committee Secretary, at 47 Harvine Walk, Norton, Stourbridge. The committee works alongside custodians of the famous rock houses, the National Trust.

Revolution

The Energy Innovation Commission's report, which was headed by former Government chief scientific advisor Sir David King, said the West Midlands was at the forefront of the modern energy revolution.

Mr Street said: "The commission has done a brilliant job in putting together a detailed and thorough report. The whole issue of energy will become of great significance as we go forward."

"For manufacturers in the West Midlands, the cost of energy is important, and given our dependence as a region on manufacturers, this becomes critical. There is no escaping the fact that some manufacturing investments in the region are dependant on a new supply of energy. It is a current constraint and therefore really does matter."

Firm's £10,000 donation to hospital



Eloise Davidson, of Birmingham Children's Hospital, with Mary Mocklow and Ian Bond, of Talbots Law

STAFF from a leading Black Country law firm have pledged their support to help Birmingham Children's Hospital carry out its life-saving care.

Talbots Law named the UK's leading specialist paediatric centre as its 'Charity of the Year' and has already presented it with a £10,000 donation to help it deliver treatments, complex surgical procedures and cutting-edge research to young people up to the age of 16.

Employees from across the company's seven offices were invited to nominate their preferred good causes and, following much deliberation, the three most popular choices were put forward for a final vote that was made at the business' annual party.

Talbots has offices in Dudley, Stourbridge, Halesowen, Kidderminster, Stourport, Wolverhampton and Codrington.

Mary Mocklow, chief executive of

Talbots Law, said: "There was a lot of personal stories of families and friends that have been helped and supported by Birmingham Children's Hospital."

"We always kick-start the year of fundraising by donating an initial sum and then we hope to build on this through a host of different activities that will be organised by the firm and our employees. The emphasis is on getting as many people involved as possible."

Sir Lenny urges support for petition

DUDLEY-BORN actor and comedian Sir Lenny Henry is urging people to sign a petition for an immigration amnesty for those who arrived in Britain decades ago.

Known as the of the 'Windrush Generation', settlers from Caribbean Commonwealth nations were invited to live and work in the UK as British subjects following the Second World War to help address labour shortages and help rebuild war-damaged Britain. But an anomaly in the law means many who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s were never formally naturalised.

Thousands have suffered immigration problems and many are being denied health services or prevented from working despite having lived in the UK their whole adult life.

Sir Lenny has tweeted his support for the petition.

The Bishop of Lichfield, the Right Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave, has also signed the petition calling for an amnesty for those who arrived as minors before 1971.

He has been joined by the Bishop of Shrewsbury, the Bishop of Wolverhampton, the Bishop of Stafford, and the chairman of the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District of the Methodist Church. See petition.parliament.uk/petitions/216539

Rock and pop choir sing at town hall

DYNAMICS Rock and Pop Choir returns to the stage in Dudley on June 6. The Dynamics Decades concert in Dudley Town Hall is to raise money for Teenage Cancer Trust. The choir will be joined by Tipton Treblemakers and a live band for the event. Tickets are £10 and can be bought through the choir's Facebook page.

EDUCATION

College helping to turn your career dreams into reality

Thinking about the future and seeing yourself in the career of your choice can seem like a distant dream while you are concentrating on your GCSEs, but visiting Halesowen College and talking to friendly and informative staff can help to turn your dream into a reality.

A spokesman for the college said: "Come to our open evening on Wednesday, April 25 between 5pm and 7.30pm to discover how we can help you take your own personal route to success."

"Curriculum staff will be available to guide you in the right direction and you can sign up straight away to secure your place for September 2018."

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the advice and guidance that will help with every stage of the decision-making process.

The spokesman added: "Achievement levels for Halesowen College students are excellent and progression to further and higher education and employment is outstanding."

"The college is Number 2 in the UK for successful student progression."

"Our students are at the heart of everything we do and we want to support them throughout their Halesowen experience."

"Students can access support from their personal coach and learning support staff, financial assistance is also available and nine out of 10 of our current students travel to Halesowen completely free of charge on college buses, which cover a range of routes right across the region."

"Make Halesowen College your number one choice. Go along to the open evening on April 25, meet college staff, secure your place and take the first step towards the successful future you deserve."



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Boiler work leaves steam fans chuffed



The boiler for the Locomotive 4930 Hagley Hall has been sent to Stockton for a major overhaul thanks to fundraising. A LOCOMOTIVE boiler is being given a major overhaul in an effort to get it back to working order by summer 2019.

The boiler for Locomotive 4930 Hagley Hall has been sent to Northern Steam Engineering in Stockton. It is part of work to get the Great Western Railway locomotive back to steam and back on track on the Severn Valley Railway.

The work has been made possible by the Friends of Lo-

comotive 4930 Hagley Hall, in association with the Severn Valley Railway Charitable Trust.

Paul Hobson, spokesman for the friends group, said: "We would like to acknowledge the financial support we have received both from the Heritage Lottery Fund and from our loyal group of 4,930 supporters in anticipation of a return to active service of the SVR's former flagship locomotive."

Driver crashed evading police

A YOUNG driver raced away at high speed from police after officers spotted him struggling to peer over the steering wheel, a court heard.

Zafon Davidson claimed he 'panicked' when officers saw him driving his friend's Renault Megane and decided to flee.

But the 19-year-old was finally caught after he crashed into another car when he sped through a red light.

The provisional licence holder came before Judge Simon Ward, who said he would take an 'exceptional' course by not sending the defendant to jail.

Sentencing Davidson at Wolverhampton Crown Court the judge added: "What you did was extremely serious. Police saw you driving and they noticed that you were hardly able to see over the top of the steering wheel."

Excessive

"They wanted you to stop and you didn't. You were driving a friend's car - you knew you weren't meant to be and your friends didn't want you to stop. You drove off, frankly at grossly

excessive speeds, through the Black Country."

Davidson, of Gibbs Road, Lye, admitted dangerous driving, driving without insurance and driving otherwise in accordance with a licence.

He was handed a nine-month sentence, suspended for one year, along with an electronically-tagged curfew and a two-year driving ban.

Davidson was spotted driving the vehicle, with two male passengers, at about 2pm on June 6, 2016. But he was brought to a halt when he smashed into a Fiat Punto.

Chamber's first female president



Chartered management accountant Julie Cunningham, of Willenhall-based AF Blakemore, is the new president

THE Black Country Chamber of Commerce has appointed its first female president - AF Blakemore's wholesale finance director Julie Cunningham.

The chartered management accountant has a wealth of commercial experience across a number of organisations, including Midland Recruitment Solutions and Poundland. She also spent six years as a self-employed financial consultant and headed up high-level projects on behalf of the Co-op, Holland & Barrett, M&S, Homeserve and the RAC.

At Willenhall-based AF Blakemore she sits on six divisional boards and has expertise in defining, implementing and managing strategy. She said: "I am delighted to be taking on the position as president of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, especially given that I am the first female to have been appointed to the role. I want to work closely with members to raise the profile of our local chamber on both a regional and national level."

Biggest business festival is set to start

MONDAY marks the start of the Black Country Business Festival and 19 of the more than 120 events between then and May 4 will be taking place in the Dudley area.

In its inaugural year, the festival is already the biggest business event in the region.

The festival will see everything from seminars, workshops, behind-the-scenes tours and speed networking to conferences, exhibitions and debates. Most events are completely free to attend.

Data

The Dudley-based events are being held in a range of different and interesting venues within the area, such as the Showcase Cinema, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley Canal Trust, Intu Merry Hill shopping centre and at several locally-based businesses which are running their own events.

A array of subject matters comprise property development, general data protection regulations (GDPR), diversity, apprenticeships, exports, recruitment, fund-

By Fiona Smith

ing and credit, as well as health and safety.

Helen Martin is the chief officer for regeneration and enterprise at Dudley Council, the authority behind DY5 - Dudley's Business and Innovation Enterprise Zone - and a partner of the Business Festival. She said, "It's fantastic to see so many events in our area."

"We are very much looking forward to the start of our first Business Festival and are delighted that DY5 is playing an integral part."

All the events are listed on the website www.blackcountrybusinessfestival.com where tickets are also available on a first come first served basis.

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Gardeners brighten up show

A GROUP of gardeners from Kingswinford, Wall Heath, Wombourne and Wolverhampton have helped to lift the gloom of the worst spring for years by turning up at a leading show with lots of flower power.

The growers delighted the organisers by entering scores of classes at the Wrekin and District Horticultural Society show at Lillleshall in early April.

The entrants were led by Phil Burden, who grows a huge variety of plants at his Wednesfield home and came away with seven trophies and 35 prize cards, including 21 first places.

Also picking up some wins was Linda Hickman from Kingswinford who is chairman of the Wall Heath allotments.

Talk on air ambulance

GUEST speaker Jeff Woodford spoke about the West Midlands Air Ambulance when Kingswinford Ladies Social Circle met on April 5 at The Royal British Legion.

He explained how fundraising was vital to keep the air ambulance flying.

It was the first meeting since February due to the snow. The ladies voted for a visit to Trentham Gardens in July.

The next meeting will be on May 3 at 7.45pm.

FOCUS ON KINGSWINFORD & WALL HEATH

It's £30k Postcode Lottery joy for lucky neighbours

A GROUP of neighbours are celebrating after scooping £30,000 each on the Postcode Lottery.

Ten households from Earlswood Road in Kingswinford have netted the cash after winning the Postcode Lottery's Street Prize. The road's postcode DY6 7DX was drawn at random as the winner – the first time a Kingswinford postcode has won.

By George Kennedy

Resident Beth Bennett, 22, a special needs school worker said: "I've always wanted to go to New York and I never thought it was possible before, but it is now."

Cruise

Winifred Price, 73, said: "I'm going to take my husband, Ken, on a cruise to France and I'll be treating my two daughters and my granddaughter too."

Sandra Petford, 68, said: "I have four kids and nine grandkids so they will definitely be getting spoiled."

Elizabeth Whitehouse, 68, along with her husband Graham, said: "I'm speechless – this is just so much more than I could ever have hoped for. This has been a difficult week as my sister-in-law passed away and Gra-

ham has been in hospital, so this definitely gives us both a reason to smile. We're celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary this year, so now we'll be able to do something extra special to mark the occasion."

Pauline Plumb, 68, said: "No way – these things always happen to other people, not me! It was my birthday on Saturday so this gives me another reason to celebrate."

Sheila Wood, 72, with son Gary, said: "This feels fantastic. I love the fact that so many other people on the street have won with me."

Charities are supported by the Postcode Lottery. Dudley Mind was awarded £17,350 last year to help people who experience mental health problems.



We're in the money – Danyl Johnson, left, with the lucky Postcode Lottery winners in Earlswood Road, Kingswinford

Firm make £1m press investment

A KINGSWINFORD manufacturer has signalled its intentions for future growth by placing a major order at the MACH 2018 exhibition held at Birmingham NEC.

Clamason Industries, which produces precision metal components and assemblies at Gibbons Industrial Park, announced a £1 million project investment with Bruderer UK to secure its largest ever press as it targets up to £6m of new orders.

The specialist supplier to the automotive, medical and building products sectors will install the 300-tonne ZANI Motion Master press in June and is hoping that the speed and additional bed size will unlock larger pressings and stampings opportunities.

Quack on for the duck race

A CANAL fun day and duck racing event aims to raise £1,000 for charity.

Kingswinford and Stourbridge Lions Club is holding the event at Wordsley Junction playing fields in a bid to raise the funds for mental health charities. It will take place 11am to 4pm on May 6 with the race at 3pm. Tickets for a duck entry can be bought on the day, or from members in The Ryemarket on Saturday morning or via 0845 833 7382.

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The Tina Turner Musical

Nobody ever did storming, gyrating rock goddess like Tina Turner, one of the best-selling artists in history, whose rasping power vocal, tempestuous personal life and sheer survival instinct were just begging to be turned into a rock opera.

Well now it has been, in a show written by Olivier award-winning playwright Katori Hall and directed by the internationally acclaimed Phyllida Lloyd, and you can see it erupt onto the stage at London's Aldwych Theatre. With coach travel, hotel accommodation and free time in London, this isn't just a great deal – it's Simply the Best!

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Council House demo over travellers' site

CAMPAIGNERS have protested over plans for a temporary travellers' site – and handed over a petition signed by nearly 1,000 people.

Members of the action group Coseley Focus stood at the foot of Dudley Council House to voice their opposition to proposals to build the transit site on Budden Road in Coseley.

And they vowed to 'do whatever it takes' to stop the plans.

The council is setting up the site in a bid to tackle illegal camps, which will cost taxpayers £150,000 a year in clean-up and legal fees. Budden Road has been chosen as the preferred site but the public can still have their say as part of a planning application.

Concerns

Coseley Focus has 956 signatures on a petition opposing the specific site, which was given to councillors before a full council meeting last week. The council has pushed back the date for objections to April 26.

Campaigner Tony Sheldon, aged 70, of Gough Road, Coseley raised concerns about the land in Budden Road being 'contaminated'. He said the protest had proved a success, adding: "It was a good day for us. We did not get as many as expected but we accomplished what we wanted to."

Council leader Patrick Harley said: "We have gone through quite a democratic process. During the consultation process residents and councillors were asked to submit alternative sites and they did, but none matched the criteria Budden Road did."

The council and police will be able to move travellers onto the transit site from camps elsewhere in the borough.



Campaigners take their contamination message to Dudley Council

Throwaway cup concern

HOSPITALS in the Black Country and Birmingham purchased millions of disposable cups over the last five years, new figures show.

Data obtained through Freedom of Information requests showed that NHS trusts in the West Midlands had bought millions of cups since 2013, amid rising concern over the environmental impact of single-use throwaway items.

Figures from Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Russells Hall, showed it received 62,925 cups but this does not include cups purchased through the trust's PFI partner.

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, which runs New Cross Hospital, ordered nearly four million and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust 10.1 million.

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They said they'd restore my smile,
but gave me back

WITH a memorable manly handshake, John Clews exudes a quiet, deep-seated confidence.

Articulate, transparent and at times philosophical, he's sharply focussed on why he's agreed to do this interview: "I want to give people like me hope," he declares.

The die-sinker knows a thing or two about clever engineering – he's been helping to construct specialised aircraft parts for more than 46 years – but with multiple failing teeth, instinctively knew that he too required the kind of skill that sets him apart as an experienced factory problem-solver.

For years, gum disease had insidiously invaded his mouth until toothache had become part of his daily routine. Intellectually, he knew he needed a dentist – and a good one – but gripped by a crippling fear he'd "pop the paracetamol" rather than face his demons.

"Fear is a terrible thing . . . I remember sitting in a dentist's chair and gripping the armrests so hard I pulled one of them off," John says.

"I came here and they promised to restore my smile, but they gave me back my life. It's true," he adds.

Practice principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS Eng GDC 108353 explains: "Periodontal disease is the biggest single cause of tooth loss in the UK and John's case is not unusual.

"There is plenty of study that examines the psychological impact of troublesome

My Life

John Clews
enjoying a fresh
out-look on life

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teeth on our lives. But like the insidious nature of gum disease, it can happen slowly as we make small changes to accommodate oral decline. Eventually, however, as things become more acute we are less able to adapt."

Matters came to head three years ago when John's family booked a weekend break at the Brecon Beacons to do a waterfalls walk. Adds John: "We take so many things for granted. We'd been walking a

good few hours and we were all ready for something to eat.

Lifestyle investment

"We came across a cafe serving bacon sandwiches. But they hadn't got any normal bread and the bacon was served with baguettes. There was no way my teeth could have coped with the crusty bread so I ended up with a piece of cheesecake. I

just so wanted a bacon sarnie, but my teeth had restricted my choice. That was it. At that point I decided to sort out my teeth.

"Too many times I'd go to a restaurant and look at 20 things on the menu and was only able to manage four of the choices. I'd really want steak, but I couldn't chew it; sometimes I just wouldn't go and eat out and I was always on my guard about smiling.

"And the toothache, the impact on daily

"The implant teeth are great and I can eat whatever I want and go out for a meal whenever I want."

"It's a lifestyle investment for me and the difference it has made to my life is remarkable. It's a new kind of freedom."

living . . . it just drags you down and confidence wanes," he says.

After having six implants in his upper jaw to support a complete arch of teeth and undergoing other remedial work, John is now able to live his life without teeth worries.

"The implant teeth are great and I can eat what I want, go out for a meal when I want and more than this . . . I've got my life back," says the keen carp fisherman.

Explaining he could have changed his car, John adds such an investment would be lost very quickly. "This [the implants] has been a lifestyle investment for me and the difference it's made to my life is remarkable. It's a new kind of freedom," he says.

And his dental phobia? "All the staff were fantastic, I felt so much at ease."

The surgery was carried out by North Street's implant dentist Owain Rees BDS DGD (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) GDC 61576.



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N-ice one Ray, good to see you back as champ

I was left a bit flat after the first half but things definitely looked up as the professional routines left the audience awestruck.

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Phil's got nowhere to Hyde in new role

A twisted, nerve-jangling tale of horror will play out at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre when Phil Daniels stars in the gothic thriller *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

The age-old tale by Robert Louis Stevenson focuses on one of the kind and gifted Dr Jekyll's most audacious experiments, in which he tries to separate good from evil.

Inadvertently, Jekyll unleashes an alternative personality of pure evil... the mysterious Mr Hyde. And as the sinister figure starts causing terror and havoc in foggy London, Jekyll must race to find a cure for his monstrous alter-ego before it takes over for good.

The new production will feature at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from May 1-5 and stars Phil Daniels, whose extensive and varied credits include Jimmy Cooper in *Quadrophenia*, Richards in *Scum* and Kevin Wicks in *EastEnders*.

Phil has worked with the RSC and NT and appeared on stage in productions as diverse as *Les Miserables* and *This House*.

We caught up with the star to find out what made him take on the role of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

How would you describe this version on the classic story?

"It's set in Victorian London so it's traditional in that respect and it's quite close in many respects to the book as well, but it delves into Dr Jekyll's personal life a bit more. There are more female characters in it, like his sister, and it explores how his father - who started the experiment which Dr Jekyll continues - was never very nice to him in his lifetime."

What's your take on the dual characters of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde?

"When I first spoke to Jenny King [the show's producer and creator of the Touring Consortium Theatre Company] about Jekyll and Hyde I was interested in the way sometimes when people have a drink they become different people. You know, they can be as good as gold one day but as soon as they've had a drink they become snarling animals. I was interested in that and approaching the characters from a point of view that, even though there is a liquid that Jekyll does take that turns him into this monster or which exposes the darker side of his personality, that darker side is in him already. He just releases it."

What are the challenges for you as an actor?

"It's about making it as real as possible - that there are two aspects of his personality and not just a crazed animal that's come out of nowhere. It's about finding out why Dr Jekyll is also Edward Hyde. What I don't want to do is make Hyde just evil, I want the audience to make their own mind up about who's the worst out of the two of them or who's the best, which facets of each character they like or appreciate and which facets they don't. That's the challenge - to make them both credible people. One might be a villain and one might commit a murder but it's because of the other one's personality that he does it."

Why do you feel theatre audiences love a good stage thriller?

"If there's a story that captures your imagination and has a beginning, a middle and an end, where something might happen

Double trouble - Phil Daniels in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*



or might not happen, it's quite thrilling. The Jekyll and Hyde story is just one of those stories that's always caught people's imaginations. I don't know how many pages the book is; I think it's only about 60 pages long, it's very slim. It's a tiny book that has led to an industry of people making films, musicals, plays, other books, writing about it and analysing it. It's very popular and understandably so."

What twists does David Edgar's play spin on the well-known story?

"He gets at the heart of the story. He tries to give a reason for Jekyll and Hyde's breakdown, where Jekyll's father gives him no credit but he gives the daughter credit instead. There's a secret in the past between the sister and the brother that's quite violent so it's not just Hyde who's the violent one, there's something violent in Jekyll as well. That's what's interesting about Edgar's script; he gets deep into that. Plus with characters like Lanyon and Utterson there's a debate going on within the play about Victorian England, how the poor are being treated and whether it's because of society that people do bad things or because of the binary system of our personalities."

Have you done any research into the Victorian era? If so, what have you been most interested to learn?

"It's interesting that medicine was at a stage where they started to think anything was possible. Great leaps forward were happening and to be involved in that as a doctor would have been something someone like Dr Jekyll would have relished. I think part of his motivation for continuing these experiments and to write papers about them is to gain notoriety in medical circles. Maybe he's just an ordinary doctor who is trying to push his way into being famous."

You've had such a long and varied career. Which roles are you most recognised for?

"Mainly it's because of *Quadrophenia*, which has become a cult film over the years. I get a little bit of *EastEnders* but not so much. [Laughs] It depends on which supermarket you go to; it happens more in Lidl than Marks and Spencer's but there you go."

With a role like this do you enjoy disappearing into a character?

"It's quite a leap for me because I'm playing Jekyll as a posh Edinburgh doctor and Hyde as a Glaswegian. I'm burying myself in all that, but it's enjoyable getting deep into characters. You have to put the work in. [Laughs] Although I don't get deep enough to go around murdering people, of course."

Are you more Jekyll or Hyde? Or a bit of both?

"I think there's a little bit of me in both of them. There's a bit of snobbery in Hyde and a bit of swagger in Jekyll but also a bit of swagger in Hyde too. It's the same with all of us I suppose."

And finally, you'll play Wolverhampton Grand at the start of May. Does it have any significance for you?

"All of Blur's road crew are from Wolverhampton and because of my association with the band hopefully some of those boys will come see the show."

ANDY RICHARDSON

● For more entertainment news and reviews see *The Ticket* in your Express & Star every Friday.

Isaac Gracie – debut album



Singer-songwriter Isaac is not Terrified any more

RISING star Isaac Gracie released his self-titled debut album last week and will be playing songs from it at Birmingham's O2 Institute tomorrow (Friday).

The singer-songwriter's mellow music has caused a stir and attracted growing attention with the singles Terrified and The Death of You & I.

With a voice apparently mature beyond his years, the 23-year-old former University of East Anglia creative writing student has been mentioned in the same breath as several greats. Having uploaded a demo version of his breakthrough song Last Words, he found it daunting to find his name placed alongside such music heroes as Jeff Buckley and Bob Dylan.

"I was like 'I'm no good! I can't write a song! You've

got me wrong! It's difficult with that gaze because they want integrity, they want truth, they want honesty – but they also want a big old smash hit," he says.

"At that time of writing songs, it was purely to try and do justice to the things I was feeling."

Then he took time out of the spotlight to explore new musical territory and learn to interact with a full band. The result is his debut album. He says: "I feel, at this point, really ready to put out the record, ready to live by it and ready to learn from it. Then I'll go forward."

The pick of the gigs also includes: Saturday, Bolan boogie with T Rextasy, Bilston's Robin 2; Monday, Barenaked Ladies back with their 15th album Fake Nudes, O2 Institute; Wednesday, hard rockers Of Mice & Men, O2 Institute.

Express jazz from acclaimed guitarist



JAZZ guitarist Remi Harris, whose celebrity fans and collaborators include Jamie Cullum, will be performing at the Pizza Express in Brindley Place, Birmingham, tomorrow night (Friday).

Remi, pictured, has more than 40 dates booked with his jazz and blues trio travelling more than 6,000 miles in three months.

Remi's unique style draws inspiration from gypsy swing, blues, rock and world music. He has toured worldwide and performed on the Chris Evans Radio 2 breakfast

show with Jamie Cullum, and has appeared at the Montreal Jazz Festival, the BBC Proms and on Radio 3. Jamie Cullum, who hosts his own jazz show on Radio 2, said, "Remi Harris is an incredible guitarist, I'm absolutely blown away by his talent."

Herefordshire-born Remi, 30, said, "I'm really looking forward to performing in Birmingham again, it has a rich history of great music and I always enjoy playing there. We've been working on new material and we're excited to be on the road again."

From the day he was born his mother, of French origin, chose the

name Remi, inspired by the musical scale Do-Re-Mi. He called his first album 'Ninick' in memory of his mother.

Primarily self taught, Remi started playing at the age of seven, initially inspired by rock and blues guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix, Peter Green and Jimmy Page. In his late teens he developed an interest in jazz music, in particular artists such as Django Reinhardt and Wes Montgomery.

To book tickets contact www.remi-harris.co.uk or call Pizza Express on 0207 4394962 and ask for the Birmingham show.

Magnum marking 50 years in music

British hard rock legends Magnum will perform at Birmingham Symphony Hall on Thursday as part of their Eternity World Tour. The rearranged show coincides with the release of their new album *Lost on the Road to Eternity*. Fronted by founders Bob Catley and Tony Clarkin, pictured, Magnum have become stalwarts of the classic rock scene in the UK over 50 years. The current five-piece line-up includes Rick Benton (keyboards), bassist Al Barrow and drummer Lee Morris.



Drag, disco, dance, comedy and science

Three men from West Bromwich Operatic Society will be putting on the flamboyant make up and outrageous frocks when the company brings disco hit-packed musical *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday. Based on the hit movie, the stage show follows the adventures of a troupe of drag queens across the Aussie Outback in an often hilarious and sometimes poignant road trip.

Strictly Come Dancing's Aljaz and Janette will be Remember Fred (Astaire) at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday. That's the same night comedian Robin Ince, who co-presents BBC Radio 4's Infinite Monkey Cage science chat with Professor Brian Cox, brings his Pragmatic Insanity solo show to Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre.

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Queen Elizabeth II

The Queen's Birthday Party (BBC1, 8pm)
A concert in celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's 92nd birthday, live from the Royal Albert Hall, featuring performances from acts from across the world and stars from around the Commonwealth. Tom Jones, Kylie Minogue, Craig David, Anne Marie, Shawn Mendes, Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Sting & Shaggy are among those taking part.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Hairy Bikers' Asian Adventure. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News. **1.15** The London Marathon: My Reason to Run. **1.45** Live Snooker: The World Championship. Coverage of two first-round matches involving Kyren Wilson and Ronnie O'Sullivan. **4.35** BBC News. **4.45** Regional Programme. **4.55** Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup. Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur (Kick-off 5.15pm). **7.15** **Pointless Celebrities.** Diane Louise Jordan, the Rev Richard Coles, Nancy Dell'Olio, Matt Barbet, Sharron Davies, Mark Foster, Gyles Brandreth and Susan Calman all take part in the unorthodox quiz show. (R) **8.00** **The Queen's Birthday Party.** A concert in celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's 92nd birthday, live from the Royal Albert Hall, featuring performances from acts from across the world and stars from around the Commonwealth. Tom Jones, Kylie Minogue, Craig David, Anne Marie, Shawn Mendes, Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Sting & Shaggy are among those taking part. **9.40** **Mrs Brown's Boys.** Dermot's pre-marriage nerves get the better of him, so he locks himself away in a cupboard. (R) **10.10** **BBC News:** Weather; National Lottery Update. **10.30** **Match of the Day.** Highlights of Saturday's two Premier League fixtures – Watford v Crystal Palace, and West Bromwich Albion v Liverpool. **11.00** **MOTD: FA Cup Semi-Final Highlights.** Dan Walker presents highlights of Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur in the opening semi-final of this year's competition at Wembley Stadium. **11.20** **The Button.** Game show set simultaneously in the houses of five UK families, whose members compete to win challenges determined by The Button in the comfort of their living rooms. (R) **11.50** **Film: The Recruit.** (2003) A hacker is recruited into the CIA and is given a top-secret assignment to root out a mole within the agency's training programme. Thriller, starring Al Pacino and Colin Farrell. **1.40** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.45** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. (R) **6.40** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. (R) **7.10** The Pets Factor. **7.30** The Designers. **8.00** Absolute Genius: Monster Builds. **8.30** Beyond Bionic. **9.00** Robot Wars. (R) **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **12.00** Wanted Down Under. (R) **12.30** Trust Me, I'm a Doctor. (R) **1.30** Britain's Biggest Warship. (R) **2.30** Top of the Shop with Tom Kerridge. (R) **3.30** Top of the Shop with Tom Kerridge. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **6.00** **Antiques Road Trip.** In Liverpool, Natasha Raskin Sharp hopes for a big hit with a Sgt Pepper-style military jacket, while Charles Hanson finds two maritime-themed stained glass panels. (R) **7.00** **Live Snooker: The World Championship.** Jason Mohammad presents coverage of the concluding session on the opening day of the ranking tournament at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where the first-round match involving Mark Selby is scheduled to conclude, and Ali Carter begins his campaign. Selby is given the honour of being involved in the first fixture of the tournament in his role as reigning champion, and the world number one is aiming to win the title for the fourth time in the last five years. **8.00** **The Forest.** An engineering team is called out to repair a 6-ton logging machine, while the owner of Balloch O'Dee campsite prepares to stage a comedy night. Mark Bonnar narrates. **8.30** **Dad's Army.** The vicar and the verger enlist in the Home Guard, but their over-enthusiastic man-management brings the wrath of Warden Hodges down upon the platoon. (R) **9.00** **Imagine – Habaneros: You Say You Want a Revolution? Part One.** Part one of two. Documentary exploring the lives of Havana residents in the wake of Raul Castro stepping down as president of Cuba, leaving the country facing an uncertain future. **10.00** **Film: Testament of Youth.** (2014) A young woman gives up her place at Oxford University to be a nurse during the First World War. Period drama, starring Alicia Vikander. **12.00** Snooker: The World Championship. **12.50** Snooker: World Championship Extra. **2.50** Civilisations. (R) **3.50** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Star Wars Freemaker Adventures. (R) **7.25** The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.30** Teen Titans Go! (R) **7.45** Adventure Time. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Saturday. **9.25** James Martin's Saturday Morning. **11.20** Film: Nanny McPhee. (2005) **1.20** ITV News: Weather. **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Ayr. Including the Coral Scottish Grand National Handicap Steeple Chase at 4.05. **4.30** You've Been Framed! (R) **5.00** The Chase. (R) **6.00** ITV News: Weather. **6.15** Regional Programme: Weather. **6.30** **Ninja Warrior UK.** A special celebrity edition of the obstacle-course challenge, with contestants including former Olympic athlete Katharine Merry and Kenzie from Blazin' Squad testing their strength, speed and courage. Those who make it to the end of the adrenaline-fueled mission face one final task – scaling the heights of a tower named Mount Midoriyama. Hosted by Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara. **7.30** **Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule.** Madcap panel show presented by the comedian, who presides over two teams nominally tasked with saving planet Earth from any potential alien invasion. **8.00** **Britain's Got Talent.** Ant and Dec host the nationwide talent search, which sees a wide variety of acts, from comedians to contortionists, singers to spoon players, compete to impress judges Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, Alesha Dixon and David Walliams and win a huge cash prize and a coveted slot at the Royal Variety Performance. **9.20** **The Keith & Paddy Picture Show.** Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness recreate Top Gun, with a little help from Keith Allen, Sarah Parish and Marc Warren. **9.50** ITV News: Weather. **10.10** **Film: Private Benjamin.** (1980) A society widow enlists in the army in the hope of finding a new direction, but comes into conflict with her tough commanding officer. Comedy, with Goldie Hawn. **12.15** Change Your Tune. (R) **1.05** Jackpot247. **3.00** Babushka. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Mobil 1: The Grid. **6.40** Motor Sport: Volkswagen Racing Cup. **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** The King of Queens. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.20** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** Frasier. (R) **9.55** Frasier. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.35** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R) **6.30** **Channel 4 News.** **7.00** **The Restoration Man: Best Builds.** George Clarke chooses four of his favourite church conversions from the programme, featuring a couple who hoped their old fisherman's church in Devon would bring them together, and a young father whose single-minded dedication to restoring a medieval Welsh chapel almost tore his family apart. Plus, the restoration novices who risked financial ruin to transform a Cumbrian village church's iconic spire, and a couple from Newcastle who battled the elements to create a bohemian artistic retreat 400 miles away in the Outer Hebrides. (R) **8.00** **Britain's Most Historic Towns.** Alice Roberts explores the Norman period of British history in Winchester. She attempts to storm a castle wearing chain mail and investigates the origins of modern surgery. **9.00** **Film: Dirty Grandpa.** (2016) Premiere. An uptight lawyer, preparing to marry his boss's controlling daughter and secure a prestigious job is persuaded to drive his fun-loving grandfather to Florida. However, the old man is convinced his grandson is about to make a terrible mistake, and turns the road trip into a wildly hedonistic weekend in the hope of inspiring him to get more fun out of life. Comedy, starring Robert De Niro and Zac Efron. **11.00** **Film: Colombiana.** (2011) An orphan grows up to be an assassin while secretly plotting revenge on the gangsters who murdered her parents. Action thriller, starring Zoe Saldana and Cliff Curtis. **1.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **1.50** Hollywoods. (R) **4.00** Building the Dream. (R) **4.55** The Question Jury. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.50** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.25** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.10** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.05** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.05** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! (R) **6.00** **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away!** High Court enforcement officers Paul, Steve and Ben make a shocking discovery when they break into a home in Essex while serving an eviction notice on a single mother and her two children. Meanwhile, Stewart and Iain receive more than just threats from the staff and owner of a taxi business, a car dealer has to choose between paying up or losing his showroom stars, and an Indian restaurant owner is in danger of losing his livelihood. (R) **7.00** **The Yorkshire Vet Casebook.** Julian Norton needs to act fast to save a cow with heart failure, a beagle goes through a difficult birth and a hamster arrives for a simple procedure that ends up proving tricky. **8.00** **The Dead Sea Treasure Map Mystery.** Cameras observe a team of archaeologists following clues from the Copper Scroll, a map that is thought to lead to a treasure haul estimated to be worth \$3billion. (R) **8.55** **5 News Weekend.** **9.00** **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Bolton Wanderers v Wolverhampton Wanderers and Cardiff City v Nottingham Forest. **10.00** **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Oldham Athletic and Portsmouth v Charlton Athletic. **10.30** **World's Deadliest Weather: Caught on Camera.** Footage capturing the destruction and chaos caused by severe weather conditions, featuring first-hand accounts from those who have survived such events. (R) **11.30** **Criminals: Caught on Camera.** (R) **12.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** The Yorkshire Vet. (R) **4.00** Made in Yorkshire. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Atlantic: The Wildest Ocean on Earth
8.00 Wild Tales from the Village
9.00 Salamander: Blood Diamonds
10.35 Room 101
11.05 Plunder: Spike Milligan
11.35 Spike Milligan: Assorted
12.35 Atlantic: The Wildest Ocean on Earth
1.35 Wild Tales from the Village
2.35 Room 101
3.05 Plunder: Spike Milligan
3.35 Close
ITV2
11.25 Britain's Got More Talent
12.25 Ninja Warrior UK
1.30 Film: Liar Liar (1997)
2.30 FYI Daily
2.35 Film: Liar Liar (1997)
3.15 Film: Yogi Bear (2010)
4.15 FYI Daily
4.20 Film: Yogi Bear (2010)
4.55 Film: Casper (1995)
5.55 FYI Daily
6.00 Film: Casper (1995)
7.00 Film: The Mummy (1999)
8.00 FYI Daily
8.05 Film: The Mummy (1999)
9.20 Britain's Got More Talent
10.20 Celebrity Juice
11.10 Family Guy
12.35 American Dad!
1.30 The Cleveland Show
1.55 Plebs
2.20 Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records
2.45 Teleshopping
5.45 ITV2
Nightscreen
ITV3
11.00 A Touch of Frost
3.20 Film: Colombo: Touch of Frost (1975)
4.55 Midsomer Murders
11.05 Vera
1.05 On the Buses
2.00 ITV3
Nightscreen
2.30 Teleshopping
ITV4
1.50 Film: Bend of the River (1952)
2.50 FYI Daily
2.55 Film: Bend of the River (1952)
3.45 Film: Chisum (1970)
4.45 FYI Daily
4.50 Film: Chisum (1970)
6.05 Film: The Green Berets (1968)
7.05 FYI Daily
7.10 Film: The Green Berets (1968)
9.00 Film: Lethal Weapon 4 (1998)
10.05 FYI Daily
10.10 Film: Lethal Weapon 4 (1998)
11.25 Film: Crank: High Voltage (2009)
12.25 FYI Daily
12.30 Film: Crank: High Voltage (2009)
1.30 Minder
2.25 The Protectors
2.55 ITV4
Nightscreen
3.00 Teleshopping
E4
11.30 The Goldbergs
2.00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
2.30 Young Sheldon
3.00 Film: The Net (1995)
5.10 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts
5.30 The Big Bang Theory
9.00 Film: Red 2 (2013)
11.10 Gogglebox
12.15 The Inbetweeners
1.25 Tattoo Fixers
2.30 Rude Tube
3.25 Gogglebox
4.20 How I Met Your Mother
5.05 Rude(ish) Tube
Film4
11.00 Support Your Local Sheriff!
1.00 Dante's Peak (1997)
3.05 The Book of Life (2014)
5.00 Shrek (2001)
6.45 Super 8 (2011)
9.00 Predestination (2014)
10.50 Sinister (2012)
1.00 Grave of the Fireflies (1988)
2.55 Close

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CHOICE



Ben Hardy

The Woman in White (BBC1, 9pm)
New series. Adaptation of Wilkie Collins' novel, starring Ben Hardy as a teacher who has a startling encounter on Hampstead Heath with a woman who has escaped from a lunatic asylum. He later takes up a position as a drawing master in Cumbria, but as he falls in love with one of his pupils, he discovers a connection between her family and the strange woman's troubled past. With Charles Dance and Jessie Buckley.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **8.10** MOTD: FA Cup Semi-Final Highlights. (R) **8.30** London Marathon. **2.00** BBC News: Weather. **2.15** Regional Programme. **3.30** Songs of Praise. **4.05** B.O.B.'s Big Break. (R) **4.15** Film: Madagascar. (2005) Animated comedy, with the voice of Ben Stiller. **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme. **6.00** **The Big Painting Challenge.** The seven remaining artists are challenged to show off their waterscape painting skills during a visit to Loch Lomond. Firstly, they must paint a boat on the water during a particularly windy day, before creating a panoramic view of the entire lake. They also receive a masterclass on mixing colours before local members of the public choose a favourite to go through to next week's semi-final. **7.00** **Countryfile.** Anita Rani visits Norfolk to meet people who are reviving traditional English crafts alive. She visits a restored wind pump in Horsey, joins a group of reed cutters on the Norfolk Broads, and meets a man who has made it his mission to restore all of the county's ancient milestones. Finally, she meets a craftsman who makes cricket bats by hand and puts one of his creations to the test. **8.00** **Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce presents the show from Castle Howard in Yorkshire, where items brought in to be valued include a rare jade Buddha and a collection of First World War aviation paintings. **9.00** **The Woman in White.** New series. Adaptation of Wilkie Collins' novel, starring Ben Hardy as a teacher delving into the mysterious and troubled history of a woman who has escaped from an asylum. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** Regional Programme. **10.30** Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman introduces highlights of Arsenal v West Ham United and Stoke City v Burnley. **11.30** MOTD: FA Cup Semi-Final Highlights. Reshmin Chowdhury presents highlights of Chelsea v Southampton in the second semi-final of this season's competition at Wembley Stadium. **12.00** The Women's Football Show. **12.35** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. (R) **6.35** Countryfile. (R) **7.30** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Gardeners' World. (R) **2.00** London Marathon. Concluding live coverage of the 38th staging of the annual event. **2.30** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The first-round matches involving Shaun Murphy and Ali Carter. **6.00** **Nature's Biggest Beasts.** The world's biggest beasts have always captured people's imagination. But while being big can have its advantages, it also comes with sizeable challenges. From the Komodo dragon, whose huge appetite means it must take on prey 10 times its weight, to the giraffe, whose long neck must control immense blood pressure, nature's biggest beasts must go to extraordinary lengths to thrive. This film tells just some of these survival stories. (R) **7.00** **London Marathon Highlights.** JJ Chalmers presents action from the 38th staging of the annual event, which saw tens of thousands of runners take on the famous 26.2-mile course. **8.00** **Britain's Biggest Warship.** HMS Queen Elizabeth goes on dangerous sea trials for the first time in the North Sea, where every part of the vessel is put to the test and the first aircraft lands on the deck. **9.00** **My Year with the Tribe.** Will makes his second trip to Indonesia and meets some other members of the Korowai tribe, only to find their lives are not as traditional as they initially appear. **10.00** Famalam. Comedy sketch show. **10.25** That's the Way, A-Ha, A-Ha, Joe Lycett. A performance from the comedian's award-winning live show, recorded at the Duchess Theatre in London's West End. **11.25** Snooker: The World Championship. The evening session on day two at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, featuring the conclusion of first-round matches involving Kyren Wilson and Marco Fu. Jason Mohammad presents. **12.15** Snooker: World Championship Extra. **2.15** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **3.15** Holby City. (R) **4.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.25** The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.30** Teen Titans Go! (R) **7.45** Adventure Time. (R) **8.00** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Sunday. **9.25** Love Your Garden. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **10.55** Nine. **11.00** Britain's Got Talent. (R) **1.25** Britain's Got More Talent. (R) **2.25** Britain's Brightest Family. (R) **3.00** The Queen's Green Planet. (R) **4.00** Change Your Tune. **5.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R) **6.00** **Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule.** Madcap panel show presented by the comedian, who presides over two teams nominally tasked with saving planet Earth from any potential alien invasion. (R) **6.30** ITV News: Weather. **6.45** Regional Programme: Weather. **7.00** **Little Big Shots.** New series. Dawn French hosts a variety show featuring some of the world's most talented children, including a singing trio and a young dog trainer. **8.00** **The Durrells.** The family plans a party to celebrate Gerry's birthday, but the occasion is invaded by a swarm of mosquitoes. Louisa worries when Spiros locks himself in a room to sing sad songs. **9.00** **The Good Karma Hospital.** Ruby and Gabriel intervene in a dispute between two fishermen, and Lydia's former mentor asks for her help. Guest starring Sue Johnston (The Royle Family). Last in the series. **10.05** ITV News: Weather. **10.20** Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, featuring reports on the latest issues and interviews with topical guests. (R) **11.20** 100 Year Old Driving School. A 91-year-old former teacher attempts to prove she is a good driver. Last in the series. (R) **11.50** This Time Next Year. Davina McCall meets a 45-year-old man who wants to track down his long-lost half-sister and a grandmother who wants to learn to read. (R) **12.40** Jackpot247. **3.00** British Superbike Championship Highlights. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Eat the Week. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.25** The Simpsons. (R) **2.55** Film: Dr Seuss' The Lorax. (2012) Animated fantasy, with the voice of Danny DeVito. **4.35** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** Grand Designs. (R) **6.30** Channel 4 News. **7.00** **Escape to the Chateau.** Dick and Angel only have a few weeks to prepare for their wedding, but the chateau is nowhere near ready to receive the 200 guests they have invited and finding reliable, affordable workers is proving difficult. Dick oversees the damming of the moat and the installation of a new, eco-friendly sewage system, while Angel turns her attention to giving the rooms a distinctive decor. Last in the series. (R) **8.00** **The Crystal Maze.** Richard Ayoade guides a team of people who met while doing jury service together through the Aztec, Medieval, Industrial and Future zones of the Maze, tackling a range of skill, mystery, physical and mental challenges before the final journey to the Crystal Dome. **9.00** **Homeland.** Carrie is forced to choose a side, Keane needs an ally and Saul comes up with an idea. Espionage drama, starring Claire Danes, Mandy Patinkin, Elizabeth Marvel and Linus Roache. **10.15** Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R) **11.10** Film: Easy A. (2010) Misfit teenager Olive lies about her non-existent sexual history, and uses the resulting rumours to become the talk of the school. Teen comedy, starring Emma Stone and Penn Badgley. **12.50** Film: Kahaani 2. (2016) Premiere. Crime thriller, starring Vidya Balan. **3.00** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **3.25** Mobil 1: The Grid. (R) **3.50** Come Dine Champion of Champions. A plumber, a lettings agent and a local communications officer battle it out. (R) **4.45** Building the Dream. (R) **5.40** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.30** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.35** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.40** Moly. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Thomas & Friends. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.25** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.40** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.20** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** Britain's Greatest Bridges. (R) **12.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.15** Film: Dances with Wolves. (1990) Oscar-winning Western, starring Kevin Costner. **5.45** Film: Pearl Harbor. (2001) Romantic Second World War drama, with Ben Affleck and Kate Beckinsale. **6.45** 5 News Update. **6.50** Film: Pearl Harbor. (2001) Concluded. **8.55** 5 News Weekend. **9.00** **Diana to Meghan: Royal Wedding Secrets.** A behind the scenes look at how previous royal weddings, to reveal how these lavish events are organised. Kiri Te Kanawa shares her memories of performing at the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana, while florists, dressmakers, tailors, ring-makers, security guards, vicars and servants all provide the inside scoop on their role in the big day. **10.00** Film: The Big Wedding. (2013) Premiere. A divorced couple attend their adopted son's wedding, and pretend to still be married to avoid shocking his birth mother. Comedy, with Robert De Niro and Diane Keaton. **11.00** 5 News Update. **11.05** Film: The Big Wedding. (2013) Concluded. **11.40** Brides Make You Laugh Out Loud. Iain Lee narrates a collection of internet videos featuring weddings. (R) **12.30** Funniest Fails, Fails & Flops. (R) **1.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** The Body in the freezer. Countdown to Murder. (R) **4.00** Tattoo Disasters UK. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.35** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Sounds of the Seventies **8.10** Natural World **9.00** Imagine – Habeneros: You Say You Want a Revolution? Part Two **10.30** Arena: Cigars – Out of the Humidor **11.30** Latin Music USA **12.30** Natural World **1.20** How to Be Bohemian with Victoria Coren Mitchell **2.20** Arena: Cigars – Out of the Humidor **3.20** Close
ITV2
11.50 Take Me Out: 10th Anniversary Special **12.50** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.50** Film: The Mummy Returns (2001) **2.50** FYI Daily **2.55** Film: The Mummy Returns (2001) **4.15** Britain's Got Talent **5.35** Britain's Got More Talent **6.40** Film: The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) **7.55** FYI Daily **8.00** Film: The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.25** Film: What If (2013) **1.25** FYI Daily **1.30** Film: What If (2013) **2.50** Teleshopping
ITV3
11.50 A Touch of Frost **1.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **3.55** Inspector Morse **6.00** Lewis **8.00** The Cruise **9.00** Tommy Cooper Forever **10.00** Tommy Cooper: Not Like That, Like This **12.10** Blue Murder **2.05** Tommy Cooper Forever **2.55** Stephen Fry's Key to the City
ITV4
1.20 Mr Bean **2.25** The Big Fish Off **3.35** Film: The Green Berets (1968) **4.40** FYI Daily **4.45** Film: The Green Berets (1968) **6.25** Film: The Spy Who Loved Me (1977) **7.25** FYI Daily **7.30** Film: The Spy Who Loved Me (1977) **9.00** Film: Assassins (1995) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10** Film: Assassins (1995) **11.40** Film: Safe House (2012) **12.40** FYI Daily **12.45** Film: Safe House (2012) **1.55** It's Not Rocket Science **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **E4**
1.30 The Big Bang Theory **5.30** Young Sheldon **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** Film: Snow White & the Huntsman (2012) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** The Inbetweeners **11.10** The Big Bang Theory **12.10** Tattoo Fixers **1.15** Rude Tube **2.45** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.35** Hollyoaks
Film4
11.00 Support Your Local Gunfighter (1971) **1.00** Mirror Mirror (2012) **3.05** Carry On Constable (1960) **4.45** Congo (1995) **6.55** Rise of the Planet of the Apes (2011) **9.00** Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol (2011) **11.35** 3:10 to Yuma (2007) **2.00** Radiator (2014) **3.55** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Social Nightmare, Channel 5, 3.15pm
 A-grade student Catherine Hardy's chances of securing a place at a good college are placed in jeopardy when inappropriate pictures and messages begin to appear on her social network profiles. It quickly becomes clear her accounts have been targeted by a malicious hacker, and she must discover whether the culprit is her boyfriend, a jealous schoolmate competing for a place at the same college, or someone much closer to home. Mystery thriller, starring Kirsten Prout. (2013)

TUESDAY
Secrets of Eden, Channel 5, 3.15pm
 A small community is shocked when a local man murders his wife, then kills himself. A detective uncovers evidence of an affair between the dead woman and the town's pastor and begins to suspect he may be implicated in the tragedy. To learn the truth, she must gain the trust of the couple's troubled teenage daughter. Drama, starring John Stamos and Anna Gunn. (2012)



Tropic Thunder, Friday, BBC1, 11.50pm

WEDNESDAY
Profile for Murder, Channel 5, 3.15pm
 A criminal profiler retires to live in California with her family and move on from the horrific crime that ended her career. Her idyllic life is shattered when she discovers the serial killer responsible has escaped from prison and is intent on terrorising her. Thriller, starring Nicky Attcox and Steve Bacic. (2013)

THURSDAY
Patricia Cornwell's The Front, Channel 5, 3.15pm
 Detective Win Garano is recruited to reinvestigate a decades-old murder, but finds someone is killing all the witnesses. Mystery drama, starring Andie MacDowell and Daniel Sunjata. Edited for daytime broadcast. (2010)

FRIDAY
Tropic Thunder, BBC1, 11.50pm
 The cast of a Vietnam War movie unknowingly wanders into the middle of a real-life conflict. Comedy, directed by and starring Ben Stiller, with Jack Black and Robert Downey Jr. (2008)

A Stern lesson awaits Hannah in leaving the family business

Lock all your doors, close the curtains and ignore any bleeps from your mobile – a new Abi Morgan TV project is about to start, so you really don't want to be disturbed.

Cardiff-born Morgan is one of the most gifted scriptwriters around today, whether she's working for the stage or screen.

Plays such as Splendour, Tiny Dynamite and The Mistress Conduct have been acclaimed, but she's gained more recognition for her film work (she wrote the screenplays for The Iron Lady and Shame, among others) and TV (the hugely underrated The Hour and Sex Traffic head her CV).

She's returning to the small screen this week with The Split, her first project for the medium since 2015's River.

"The Split will be an emotional and entertaining exploration of love, marriage and divorce, with Abi bringing her trademark wit, insight and truth to our two brilliant and strong women fighting to try and

work out how to survive modern life," says executive producer Jane Featherstone.

At its heart is the rather fraught relationship between three members of the same family – matriarch Ruth and her daughters Hannah, Nina and Rose.

While Rose, the younger sister, is still searching for her place in life and Nina is proving to be a formidable legal eagle, Hannah is a top divorce lawyer who had been working for her family's firm – until Ruth denied her the promotion she felt she deserved, prompting her to take a job with a rival company. Now mother, daughter and sister find themselves locking horns over complex divorce cases rather than collaborating.

"As Robin Williams once said 'Divorce is expensive... like ripping your heart out through your wallet,'" smiles Morgan. "The Split exposes the complex realities of high end divorce and broken marriage through female divorce lawyers and sisters embattled and bound by their own troubled past."

Heading the cast is Nicola Walker, who's best known for her performances in Last Tango in Halifax and Unforgotten, but who also had a supporting role in the aforementioned River. She takes the part of Hannah.

"I'm delighted to be joining the Defoe family and walking in Hannah's shoes as she picks her way through other people's marriages and relationships, all the while questioning her own," claims the star.

Hannah is married to the smart and affable Nathan (Stephen Mangan), and they appear to be well-matched and happy – until her estranged father, who deserted his family 30 years earlier, appears out of the blue, prompting her to question all her male relationships.

To throw a further spanner in the works, Hannah is reconnecting with Christie, 'the one who got away ...

Also included in the cast are Meera Syal and Stephen Tompkinson as former childhood sweethearts Goldie and Davey.



Nicola Walker stars in The Split, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Holidays Unpacked Channel 4, 8pm
 New series. Brits spend about £1,000 each on a week's holiday in the summer sun, with the majority heading to the Mediterranean. But could more fun be had for the same money? In this programme, Morland Sanders and Lucy Hedges road test up-and-coming travel destinations, taking viewers to on-trend destinations on everyday budgets. The first edition sees Lucy visit Israel to explore the desert and float in the Dead Sea, while Morland samples Costa Rica's pristine Pacific beaches and takes a zip-line through the cloud forest.

Fergie vs Wenger: The Feud Channel 5, 10pm
 Channel 5 have issued a warning with this programme - apparently it contains highly offensive language. Oo-er. Those of us of a particularly sensitive nature had better not tune in; then again, would we expect anything else from a football-related programme? Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger's rivalry is legendary and went on for years. Ferguson turned Manchester United into the English top flight's dominant force, while Wenger's Arsenal would occasionally nip in to steal their thunder if the Red Devils ever slipped up. Both men

had very different approaches to the beautiful game - while one favoured a traditional approach, the other learnt valuable lessons from advances in sports science. Here, those who crossed their paths, including Paul Scholes, Steve McClaren, John Motson and Sol Campbell, offer their views.

TUESDAY
Flight HS13 Channel 4, 11pm
 Like so many foreign language series to pop up on Channel 4 these days, this one comes courtesy of the streaming service Walter Presents and the box set of every episode will be available immediately after the first has aired tonight. But, if you prefer to watch dramas the old-fashioned way, fear not because we'll be drip-fed this Dutch thriller here every Tuesday for the next 10 weeks. The plot focuses on happily married Simon and Liv, who appear to have the perfect lives complete with a wonderful son, a beautiful home and successful careers. However, at a family reunion held to mark their offspring's birthday, a surprise guest shakes things up. The next day,

Simon leaves for a medical conference in Barcelona - and shortly afterwards, Liv's life is thrown into disarray by the worst possible news.

WEDNESDAY
Britain's Fat Fight with Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall BBC1, 9pm
 Britain is on track to become the fattest country in Europe by 2025 – unless Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall has his way, that is. In this new series, he'll be trying to find out how obesity became such a problem and what we can do to stop it. That involves investigating some of the UK's biggest food brands and working alongside the GPs and pharmacists who are tackling the problem on the frontlines. But at the heart of the series is a ground-breaking social experiment which sees Hugh challenging the people of



Holidays Unpacked, Monday, Channel 4, 8pm

Newcastle to lose 100,000lbs over the course of a year. With the help of the city's council, he'll be encouraging the locals to make changes to their diet and get involved in physical activities, but can they collectively reach the ambitious target?

THURSDAY
The Truth About Obesity BBC1, 8pm
 Nearly one in four people in the UK qualifies as being obese, meaning their weight is significantly affecting the state of their health. Presenter Chris Bavin seeks out the latest research into obesity and the problems that are being passed down to future generations. He finds out what it means to be obese, what it does to the body and looks at the most up-to-date solutions available. He also reveals how viewers can test themselves with a simple piece of string to find out if they have the most damaging type of fat.

FRIDAY
Our Wildest Dreams Channel 4, 8pm
 New series. Ex-executive Mari leaves south-east London for a new life in Ecuador, hoping the move with her native husband and their young daughter will bring her family closer.

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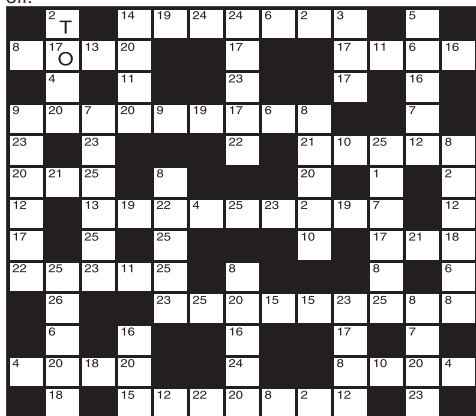
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No.476

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
T	R	O	D	N	B	A	P	K	G	Z	H	Y
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Q	M	F	S	X	I	E	W	U	L	V	C	J

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

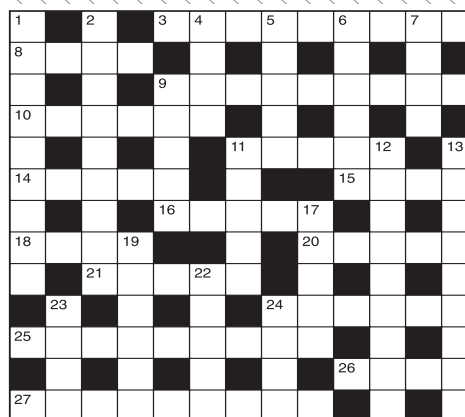
Cryptic Clues:

Across

3. Plenty in favour of a merger (9)
8. Dash from Iceland (4)
9. Sluggard making little progress with a tutor (9)
10. Class a number as precise (6)
11. Almost rate as fools (5)
14. Rob with a gun (5)
15. Absorbed with a new part (4)
16. Wounds in a most absent-minded way (5)
18. A vessel that has been taken out of the water (4)
20. Acted strangely for a Service trainee (5)
21. Stretch - of river? (5)
24. Others acquire their habits from him (6)
25. Went to pieces when praised (7,2)
26. Norwegians live in what was Czechoslovakia (4)
27. Pay a visit after some persuasion? (4,5)

Down

1. Man of action, in his turn (9)
2. Not a bad bid for the roundabouts? (4,5)
3. List a waiter may be asked for (4)
4. Colours and becomes servile (5)
5. Rather earlier (6)
6. Not often seen in London certainly! (4)
7. These are sure to be brisk for beer on board (5)
8. Partly under water from waves caused by a passing vessel (5)
9. Old-timer (9)
10. Specify space available for a first-class passenger (9)
11. Throw away a fight? (5)
12. Possibly secure and free from danger (6)
13. Communist firm about belief (5)
14. After hesitation leave thus (4)
15. A diverting act? (4)



Quick Clues:

Across

3. Declaration (9)
8. Shape (4)
9. Liveliness (9)
10. Vigour (6)
11. Pondered (5)
14. Chop finely (5)
15. Tear (4)
16. Occurrence (5)
18. Fling (4)
20. Get up (5)
21. Compass (5)
24. Claim (6)
25. Detour (9)
26. Signify (4)
27. The accused (9)

Down

1. Consequences (9)
2. Immaturity (9)
4. Small (4)
5. Time (5)
6. Affair (6)
7. Mid-day (4)
9. Concur (5)
11. Bit (5)
12. Devoted (9)
13. Retainer (9)
17. Seized (5)
19. Plan (6)
22. Sat for picture (5)
23. Conceal (4)
24. In adversity (4)

4					9			7
		3		6		5		1
9		8						
	2			3	4		9	
				7		4		6
	8		1		6		5	
	6	4		5		7		
2			7			6		8

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

**LAST WEEK'S
SOLUTIONS >**

2	7	3	8	6	9	5	1
6	5	9	3	1	4	8	7
1	8	4	2	5	7	6	3
5	1	7	9	8	3	4	2
9	6	2	5	4	1	7	8
3	4	8	6	7	2	1	9
7	3	5	4	2	8	9	6
8	2	6	1	9	5	3	4
4	9	1	7	3	6	2	5

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 DRYPU: Across: 1 Gold; 3 Educator; 8 Neon;
 9 Returned; 11 Poor relation; 13 Rating; 14 Grocer;
 17 Pursued; 20 Primates; 21 Zinc; 22 Speedier;
 23 Aged. Down: 1 Conspire; 2 Look out; 4 Dwells; 5
 Court order; 6 Tango; 7 Ride; 10 Grandstand;
 12 Produced; 15 Crowing; 16 Inhere; 18 Raise;
 19 Opus.
 QUICK - Across: 1 Pact; 3 Dampness; 6 Real;
 9 Predator; 11 Embarrassing; 13 Strict; 14 Proper;
 17 Evil speaking; 20 Extended; 21 Maze;
 22 Besieged; 23 Less. Down: 1 Pervase;
 2 Comforter; 4 Air; 5 Eat; 7 Eaten; 7 Sure;
 10 Truculence; 12 Progress; 15 Private; 16 Sphere;
 18 Votes; 19 Herb.

1. Who played Fred's mother-in-law in the 1994 live action film The Flintstones?
2. In which country did King Farouk abdicate in 1952?
3. Which Beatles song was covered by 1,186 performers in its first seven years?
4. What type of animal is the blackcap?
5. On which Scottish island was John Smith buried?
6. On what date does Epiphany fall?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Nelson Mandela: 2 The New Yorker:

3 A snake: 4 Rhine: 5 1978: 6 Hansard:

7 The Spanish Armada Medal: 8 Sir Compton

Mackenzie: 9 Chile: 10 Marshal.

Niner: ALCHEMIST

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

16345276
1278
9537

- gives a small animal,
- gives a second small animal,
- gives small particles.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Girlie lunch just in the Nick of time

OH, to be ladies what lunch. My friend and I lived our improbable dream with a lunch date at the swanky Harvey Nichols Restaurant in The Mailbox.

Just to give you a bit of background, I met said friend at a pregnancy yoga class. In our pre-child naivety, we thought our maternity year would be littered with lunches together; elegant affairs in which we'd sip Prosecco and nibble chiccetti-style plates while spooning Ella's Kitchen mush into the mouths of our contended babes, who absolutely weren't demanding Peppa Pig on YouTube.

How wrong we were. I seem to remember our only 'lunch date' was a rather fraught hour spent with our little ones in Nando's, ending in us both exhausted and apologising to waiting staff for the amount of debris under the table. Hardly what we'd envisaged.

FRAUGHT

So on a child-free, work-free Thursday we ventured into town for a day of shopping and lunching, with the possibility of a swim afterwards. We felt just like the happy-go-lucky teenagers we once were, but with more than a bus pass, a cute boy's phone number (home landline, obvs) and a fiver in our pockets.

After a morning mooching round the shops we headed to Harvey Nicks for a spot of lunch. It's a sophisticated venue which feels very grown-up, ideal for boozy brunches, lunches, afternoon teas and cocktail-soaked dinners with friends. An Art Deco-inspired space, it has a beautiful buffed parquet floor, and on-trend use of gold, leather and pastel pink and green.

On this occasion the restaurant was quiet and we had the pick of the tables even though I'd made a booking on the website. As we moved on to the wine the 'possibility' of going swimming afterwards was

Burger and fries – but not as you know it



Art Deco appeal – sophisticated dining



becoming probably impossible. Oh well. She ordered a glass of Sauvignon Blanc while I pushed the boat out with a £10 glass of Sancerre. It was delicious, golden nectar and went straight to my head.

When Harvey Nicks relaunched in the Mailbox a few years ago, the restaurant menu was curated by Yummy Brummie Michelin star chef Glynn Purnell. However, recently Stewart Mackie has taken over as head chef and – similarly to before – the menu is packed with temptation; choices include salads, risottos, and burgers. There are a couple of steaks on offer for

hungry carnivores, and a reasonably-priced special menu offers three courses for £22.

My friend chose the risotto topped with halloumi and aubergine, while I chose the sweet potato and chickpea tagine with grilled courgette.

Our food arrived and looked delish. Light-headed from the wine, I eagerly tucked into my tagine. The veg were well cooked, not overly soft however, the dish as a whole was a bit bland.

My friend said her comforting bowl of risotto was lovely and creamy with just the right amount of bite.

For dessert I chose the sticky toffee pud and vanilla ice cream for which I'm sure I'd need to swim an entire ocean to burn off its calorie content. The giant wedge of airy sponge was as wicked as I expected.

Meanwhile, my friend opted for the peanut butter cheesecake with popcorn and blackberries. She polished off the lot and didn't offer me any so it must have been good.

The bill, including service, came to just over £70. reasonable for such an agreeable lunch. An adult day out, just in the Nick of time! EMILY BRIDGEWATER

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Departing Monday 25 Jun

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- ✓ Excursions to Exbury Gardens and Steam Railway, Monkey World & Poole

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Five-bedroomed substantial family home with views

Positioned in a quiet cul-de-sac off Catholic Lane, 19 Larkwood Drive, Sedgley, Dudley, is a substantial five-bedroomed family residence, with stunning views to the rear.

It is for sale through Skitts Estate Agents at £399,950. In a very popular area, it is close to a range of amenities and a short distance from Sedgley town centre.

Although the position of this property is one of its finest qualities, with the stunning views to the rear, this impressive home also boasts five bedrooms, two bathrooms, two reception rooms, a fitted dining kitchen, a downstairs WC and a 29ft garage to the rear. There is ample parking to the front and an enclosed delightful garden to the rear.

It has an entrance hallway with two storage cupboards leading to the lounge. This has a coal-effect gas fire with a marble-style surround and hearth, a feature fireplace, a double-glazed bay window and doors leading into the sitting room. The downstairs WC has a wash hand basin, low flush WC and double-glazed window.

The kitchen area has a range of fitted wall and base units with worktops, an inset set sink top with a drainer and a mixer tap, a built-in oven with a four-ring electric hob and a cooker hood and dining area off. The dining area has double-glazed windows and a door leading out to the rear garden. The sitting room has a coal-effect electric fire with a feature fire-place double-glazed sliding patio doors leading to the rear garden.

Upstairs, bedroom one has an en-suite with a white suite. The bathroom has a white suite.

The garage has an electric up-and-over door to the front, a door to the side, plumbing for a washing machine and a window. The rear garden is enclosed and private from neighbouring properties, having a lovely view to the rear, a patio area with a step up to a lawn area and separate seating area, numerous flowers and flowering shrubs.

SEDGLEY £399,950



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Skitts Estate Agents

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KEY FEATURES

Impressive property

5 bedrooms

2 bathrooms

2 reception rooms

Stunning views



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PROPERTY



Charming and substantial cottage with garden

This substantial detached cottage in School Road, Himley, comes with a large and beautifully established private garden, which runs down to a stream and fields beyond.

It is for sale through Taylors Estate Agents at £389,950. It has a large gated driveway with a substantial detached double garage and a large workshop and store which provides many uses and much potential for a home work space.

The accommodation is incredibly

**HIMLEY
£389,950**

spacious and attractively presented throughout, retains much of the original charm and character.

The layout includes the reception hall, attractive lounge with double doors to the formal dining room, large family dining kitchen with appliances, utility room, pantry/store and verandah.

The first floor has four good bedrooms and a spacious family bathroom with a shower.

The property is superbly located within Himley village, convenient for commuters, surrounding towns and villages.

The selling agents are expecting the marketing of this property to generate a lot of interest.

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Dudley Chronicle
Thursday, April 19, 2018

New



COSELEY, Rock Road, Hurst Hill

PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS from the front! Delightful, tremendously modernised & improved, gas centrally heated, uPVC double glazed, traditional, terrace of character with many period features. The stunning accommodation includes: lounge (with woodburning stove) & wood block floor, lobby, dining room (with woodblock floor), upgraded kitchen with a fine range of units, reappointed bathroom with traditionally style white suite. THREE BEDROOMS. Two brick stores, delightful lengthy well stocked rear garden with decking. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £145,000

New



SEDGLEY, Sandyfields Road

FANTASTIC - ready to move into! Re-furnished, re-decorated, & re-carpeted, Upvc double glazed, heated, GROUND FLOOR, apartment within reasonable distance of so many day-to-day amenities/country park/bus routes etc. The superb accommodation provides: entrance vestibule, lounge, upgraded kitchen, inner hallway, TWO BEDROOMS, reappointed bathroom. Allocated/sheltered rear garden and GARAGE. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £125,000

New



LANESFIELD, Ward Grove

TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL! A traditional freehold UPVC double glazed semi detached bungalow for improvement in popular convenient district. Requiring comprehensive refurbishment the accommodation provides kitchen, living room with bay, bathroom, two bedrooms, lengthy garden. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

●●Offers based on £100,000 to be received for the vendors consideration by Midday on Monday 23rd April 201●●.



LOWER GORNAL, Keats Close, Straits

NO UPWARD CHAIN. COMPREHENSIVELY MODERNISED, gas centrally heated, double glazed bungalow with panoramic distant views comprising: hall, lounge, enlarged bathroom, utility room, stunning 22'4" through 'hub of the house' dining kitchen with comprehensive range of 'arts & crafts' oak style units (double French doors out to garden), two double bedrooms, garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

New price WAS £227,500, NOW £225,000



LOWER GORNAL, Irving Close, Straits

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Located on quiet cul-de-sac location in the sought after area of the Straits' in Lower Gornal, this well proportioned semi detached dormer style bungalow which has been extended & much improved. As well as having gas central heating and double glazing this THREE BEDROOM also boasts: porch, hallway, kitchen-diner, extended lounge, bathroom, Garage, utility room, enclosed rear garden, car port with drive, garden to front. EPC: D SEDGLEY.

New price WAS £229,950, NOW £219,000



KINGSWINFORD, Southern Close

●Open Viewing Saturday 21st April 11am-1pm● An IMMACULATE & BEAUTIFULLY RE-APPOINTED LINK DETACHED HOUSE with a LANDSCAPED and PRIVATE REAR GARDEN, offering a GENEROUS layout which is ready to move into and includes a Luxury Refitted Family Dining Kitchen with appliances and THREE BEDROOMS. With DRIVEWAY and GARAGE. EPC D

Open day Offers Around £215,000



PENSNETT, Woodfield Avenue

THIS THOUGHTFULLY EXTENDED & BEAUTIFULLY MAINTAINED, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises Hall, Two Spacious Reception Rooms, EXTENDED KITCHEN, Three First Floor Bedrooms, MODERN RE-APPOINTED SHOWER ROOM, Driveway, Garage & Beautiful Garden. EPC E

No upward chain £174,950



SEDGLEY, Lime Road

JUST FINISHED! RENOVATED & UPGRADED, gas centrally heated (recent combi boiler), uPVC double glazed, intermediate 'starter home' that has been 'transformed' in recent months. Set in popular district, the accommodation includes: entrance porch, reception hall, store, lounge with bay, stunning through 'hub of the house' dining kitchen, utility section, lobbies, store & w.c. THREE BEDROOMS, reappointed bathroom, gardens. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £153,000



KINGSWINFORD, Summer Street

THIS VERY SMART and DECEPTIVE PERIOD SEMI DETACHED HOUSE is within a short walk from village shops and offers a GENEROUS and IMMACULATELY PRESENTED layout which includes TWO LARGE DOUBLE BEDROOMS. To the rear of the property is a LARGE LEVEL SUNNY GARDEN. EPC D

No upward chain £150,000



UPPER GORNAL, Spills Meadow

A delightfully presented and well maintained link-semi detached in the popular area of Upper Gornal. Being offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN, this ideal family home also boasts: hall, lounge-diner, breakfast-kitchen, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom with separate W/C and gas central heating along with garage and enclosed rear garden. EPC C SEDGLEY

New price WAS £149,950, NOW £139,950



LOWER GORNAL, Wood Road

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Well presented semi detached home ideal for the first time buyer looking to get onto the property ladder. Located in the popular Lower Gornal area and consisting of living room, kitchen-diner, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, gas central heating and double glazing with enclosed rear garden and drive with ample parking to front. EPC D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £139,950



UPPER GORNAL, Harvest Close

A superbly presented starter home enviously situated in a cul-de-sac location in the popular Upper Gornal area of Dudley. As well as having parking and enclosed rear garden this fantastic starter home also boasts: porch, living room, kitchen-diner, TWO BEDROOMS, attractive family bathroom, gas central heating and double glazing. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £134,950



COSELEY, Minith Road

This well-proportioned semi-detached property is situated in the popular locale of Coseley in Wolverhampton. With entrance hall, gas central heating and double glazing this THREE BEDROOMED family home also boasts: living room, dining room, kitchen, rear hall with utility room and guest W/C, family bathroom enclosed front and rear gardens and offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £129,950



COSELEY, Mount Pleasant Street

OUTSTANDING! - Tremendously modernised and improved gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed and recently re-roofed and extensive re-plastering traditional terrace of character comprising entrance hallway, lounge, lobby, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, THREE BEDROOMS, sheltered garden. EPC D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £125,000



LOWER GORNAL, Kennedy Crescent

Located in the popular Lower Gornal area of Dudley and within walking distance of local amenities, schools and bus routes, this well-proportioned intermediate has lots to offer as a family home. Having gas central heating and double glazing this THREE BEDROOM house also has hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, family bathroom, rear garden, drive to front and offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £124,950



TIPTON, Moat Road

Offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN, this THREE BEDROOMS end of terrace property benefiting from, living room, fitted kitchen, bathroom, central heating, garden to rear with off road parking to fore. VIEWING ESSENTIAL! EPC Rating E SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £110,000



UPPER GORNAL, Vale Street

Conveniently located in the popular Lower Gornal area, this traditional terraced property is well presented and offers accommodation over two floors and comprises of living room, dining room, refitted kitchen, TWO BEDROOMS, bathroom, gas central heating and mostly double glazed, with enclosed garden to rear. It is also offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £109,950



WOLVERHAMPTON, Sutton Court, Ettingshall Park

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Recently refurbished, superbly presented FIRST FLOOR apartment being an ideal bungalow alternative, first step on the property ladder or even investment opportunity and briefly comprising: hall, living room, re-fitted kitchen, bathroom with separate W/C, double glazing. EPC: E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £64,950

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 •Exceptional individual detached family home. Set within well tended walled gardens
 •Spacious five bedroom accommodation over three floors
 •Impressive conservatory, three reception rooms, high quality fittings throughout
 •Extensive breakfast kitchen, utility room and playroom
 •EPC RATING C



7 BOUNDARY CRESCENT, LOWER GORNAL £187,500
 •Extended & considerably improved semi detached house
 •Well maintained accommodation with three bedrooms plus attic room
 •Added benefit of a sun room, bar, utility area and sauna room
 •Rear garden with decking on two levels and swimming pool
 •EPC RATING D



'WOODBINE COTTAGE', 73 STOURBRIDGE ROAD, HAGLEY £325,000
 •Attractive double fronted end of terrace cottage
 •Bedroom one with en-suite shower room, two further bedrooms
 •Well maintained & improved double glazed accommodation
 •Car parking to side of property with easily maintained rear garden
 •EPC RATING D



9 OLD QUARRY DRIVE, UPPER GORNAL £294,995
 •Modern detached house in popular cul de sac location
 •Bedroom one with en suite shower room, three further bedrooms
 •Well maintained accommodation with conservatory & utility room
 •Views to the front over Cotwall End Nature Reserve
 •EPC RATING C



2 LINLEY GROVE, GORNAL WOOD £169,950
 •Semi detached house with three bedrooms
 •Pleasant & convenient residential cul-de-sac location
 •Well maintained and improved accommodation
 •Through lounge and dining area, easily maintained gardens
 •EPC RATING C



37 DALESWOOD PARK, ROMSLEY £129,950
 •New park home enviably positioned on a hard landscaped plot with ample patio areas
 •Overlooking adjoining woodland within a semi rural locality
 •Contemporary accommodation with open plan living room, dining/kitchen area
 •Two bedrooms with built in wardrobes, shower room with large walk in shower
 •Daleswood Park is a small park home site, designated for owner occupiers only



9A RUSSELLS HALL ROAD DUDLEY £105,000
 •Semi detached house
 •Two bedrooms
 •L' shaped lounge & kitchen
 •In need of improvement & updating works
 •Ideal opportunity for a first time purchaser or investor
 •EPC RATING E



45 GOODRICH MEWS £100,000
 NO UPWARD CHAIN
 UPPER GORNAL
 •Modern first floor apartment
 •Two bedrooms
 •Telephone entry system
 •Two car parking spaces
 •EPC RATING B



458 HIMLEY ROAD DUDLEY
 Guide Price £100,000
 •Character Gornal Wood cottage with footpath access only to the front
 •Occupying a level garden plot with potential for extension and improvement
 •Approached from Himley Road over an unmade driveway
 •Pleasant cottage gardens
 •NO PROVISION FOR OFF ROAD PARKING
 •EPC RATING F



BUILDING PLOT ADJ 54 DEEPPDALE LANE £98,000
 •Individual building plot
 •Planning consent for a five bedroom detached dwelling
 •Planning application number P15/1679
 •Popular and established residential area
 •Excellent views to the rear

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Chalmers Road,
Baggeridge
Village

£475,000

	2		4
	2	EPC	B



Larkwood
Drive, Sedgley

£399,950

	2		5
	2	EPC	TBC



Himley Gardens,
The Straits

£245,000

	2		3
	1	EPC	D



Charles
Hayward Drive,
Wolverhampton

£215,000

	1		3
	2	EPC	B



Northway,
Sedgley

£205,000

	2		3
	1	EPC	E



Board School
Gardens, Upper
Gornal

£179,950

	1		2
	1	EPC	TBC



The Ridgeway,
Sedgley

£179,950

	1		3
	1	EPC	D



Eve Lane, Upper
Gornal

£137,500

	1		3
	1	EPC	D



School Street,
Sedgley

£129,950

	2		2
	1	EPC	E



Barr Street,
Lower Gornal

£112,500

	2		2
	1	EPC	E



Louise Street,
Gornal Wood

£269,950

	1		4
	1	EPC	D



South Oval,
Upper Gornal

Auction Guide Price £95,000

	1		3
	1	EPC	D



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Specification and price for the 2018 Outback

Host to a series of updates, both exterior and interior, Outback is a rugged crossover estate, redesigned to raise cabin quality and refine the model's plethora of safety offerings. Boasting a significant upgrade in technology and trim, the changes come at no extra costs for customers as pricing remains the same as the previous model.

Among the most significant changes to the exterior is the redesigned front grille, bumper, door mirrors and headlights. The hexagonal grille redesign showcases a sharper, more defined shape and incorporates the distinctive Subaru wing design, which draws parallels to the iconic horizontally opposed Boxer engine.

An addition to both the exterior design and the safety suite is a new front view camera, which has been positioned below the marques six-star badge. Placed on the front grille, the front view camera can monitor a 180°-degree area in front of the car that would normally be in the driver's blind spot. These images, as well as visible guidelines, are displayed on the touchscreen to aide drivers in gauging potential hazards in front of the car and improve overall manoeuvring.

Allowing for increased all-round visibility, the 2018 Outback SUV is fitted with an additional side view camera mounted at the base of the passenger door mirror. Displaying the area diagonally in front of the passenger side of the Outback, the resulting imaging allows drivers to navigate through narrow spaces with greater ease.

Safety


A welcome addition to the Outback is the inclusion of Lane Keep Assist, which completes the EyeSight driver assistance safety technology suite – included as standard on all 2018 Outback models. Lane Keep Assist offers gentle steering control if the vehicle is about to deviate from its lane at approximately 40mph or above. Subaru's EyeSight driver assist technology suite includes: Adaptive Cruise Control, Lead Vehicle Start Alert, Lane Sway and Departure Warning, Lane Keep Assist, Pre-collision Braking System and Pre-collision Throttle Management.

Steering Responsive Headlights are also new, improving driver safety and increasing visibility at night. The headlight beams mirror the driver's steering input to illuminate corners when turning.

Interior changes include a subtle redesign. New decorative gloss black panels and silver surrounds create a consistent and sophisticated look, whilst the touchscreen size has been increased from 7" to a new 8" multifunction colour touchscreen for the SE Premium model, which is also compatible with both Apple CarPlay™ & Android Auto™ and DAB radio functionality. The SE trim level also receives a refresh with an updated 6.5" multifunction colour touchscreen and fabric seating trim with heated front seats.

Outback is powered by a naturally-aspirated 2.5-litre 'FB25' petrol unit. Due to the size and shape of Subaru's Boxer engine, it is installed lower down and further back than a conventional engine for a lower centre of gravity and transitions beneath the passenger compartment in the event of a collision, providing an added level of safety for occupants within the vehicle. The Boxer engine – with its unique 'punch-counterpunch' rotational cycle – offers smoothness, low vibration and noise, plus excellent accelerator response. The 2.5L engine produces 175PS at 5,800rpm and 235Nm torque at 4,000rpm. The engine returns fuel economy of 38.7mpg on the combined cycle and CO2 emissions of 166g/km.

Prices for the 2018 Subaru Outback start from £29,995 for the SE Model and £33,010 for the SE Premium.



An executive express with practicality, interior space and all-weather ability

By John Griffiths

Driving can be a stressful experience – and all the more so when the weather turns bad.

So confidence in your car is important as I found when Volvo met the Beast from the East.

The Swedes know a bit about snow driving, and it showed in the way the V90 Cross Country (a big, practical estate with the benefit of four wheel drive) shrugged off the icy blast and blizzard on a return trip from Wales.

Rapid windscreen and back window-clearing heaters, dual zone climate control, heated seats and a heated steering wheel (what a surprising difference that makes!) means you are cosy, comfortable and cocooned from the elements.

Meanwhile the four wheel drive system and the array of driver aids and safety systems for which Volvo is renowned gives you confidence that you will soon be back by a warm fireside.

The Cross Country is the flagship of the V90 premium estate range, no less tough and practical for its lavish, comfortable interior.

Premium

Prices start from £42,520 but the test car was near the top of the range, with the more powerful D5 PowerPulse engine (235 as opposed to 190bhp) and in Pro specification, which means lots of added extras and comes with a list price of £47,905.

The test car was also something of a shop window for optional extras, taking the total price up by another £10,000 – including £3,000 for the premium Bowers and Wilkins sound system.

It's more than 20 years since Volvo added four wheel drive and the 'Cross Country' tag to its big estate range, a move later copied by premium German rivals. Such cars were always something of a niche product: more so now because of the burgeoning demand for full-blown SUVs. Volvo itself now has three in varying sizes and prices. But Volvo is something of an icon for those who want or need a big estate car, and in spite of its lower, sleeker looks the V90 Cross country is no less capable.

As well as four driven wheels, the car has 65mm extra ground clearance over the standard V90, a slightly wider track, side protectors and skid plates front and rear, and proved more than capable of tackling some very muddy forest tracks.

On the road, though, where the car will spend the majority of its time it's a match for any luxury car: smooth, quiet and relaxing to drive.

It will seat five in comfort with room for their luggage – 560 litres of cargo space, rising to 1,536 litres if the electrically-operated rear seats and headrests are folded down. The tailgate is electrically operated, too.

From the outside, even the Cross Country's extra height doesn't detract from its sleek, even sporty lines: you



It's more than 20 years since Volvo added four wheel drive and the 'Cross Country' tag to its big estate range

are only really aware of its size when you park next to something more conventional.

That's mirrored by the driving experience, too: a cossetting ride while remaining as agile as many a smaller vehicle. It suits that relaxed but capable ambience which is the car's hallmark.

That's enhanced, too, by Volvo's 'pilot assist' system, an advanced form of cruise control. Set your chosen speed and the radar system will keep you a set distance from traffic ahead, autonomously braking if necessary, and resuming the selected speed when its clear.

It will also, on a motorway or dual carriageway, ensure you stay between your lane lines with gentle steering inputs.

The Pro specification test car also came with features such as blind spot monitoring, cross traffic alert, run-off road mitigation, city safety system capable of detecting pedestrians, cyclists and animals as well as the more usual stability, ABS and airbag systems.

You can change the car's character at the touch of a button, with comfort, economy or the stiffer, more dynamic sport mode. Economy, which softens the throttle and transmission responses, also proved ideal when driving on snow and ice.

The turbo diesel engine is, at two litres and four cylinders, relatively small for a car of this size but isn't lacking in performance. As well as its 235bhp it has 480Nm of torque and comes with PowerPulse, a compressed air system which eliminates any hint of turbo

lag. This combination makes it quick off the mark (0 to 62mph in 7.5 seconds) but more importantly, working through a slick automatic transmission any demand for power – for example when overtaking – is met instantly and effectively.

The official fuel economy figure (laboratory tests) is just under 50mpg, while I averaged a little over 37mpg in my time with the car. Its CO2 rating is 151g/km.

The cabin has a upmarket appeal, with lashings of leather and upmarket trim materials. Four zone climate control on the test car (two zone is standard) plus a panoramic sunroof added to the ambience.

The dash is tidy and minimalist, largely because manfunctions are controlled by driver or passenger via the nine-inch colour touchscreen in the centre. This includes the Sensus navigation system, audio system, smartphone and Bluetooth connectivity.

The driver, of course, has remote controls on the steering wheel for operating many of the secondary systems, plus speed limiter and cruise control, at the touch of a thumb and an eight-inch selectable information panel between the main digital instruments.

The Cross Country is an executive express with added practicality – its interior space and all-weather ability – in its favour.

While many saloons and estates have lost out to SUV-styled vehicles in recent years, the Volvo stands up to comparison with many such rivals, especially when price and running costs are taken into account.

Every millimetre counts in new RX L

Sometimes it only takes a small change to make a big difference. That's how Lexus has succeeded in designing its first seven-seat version of the RX luxury SUV, the new Lexus RX L.

Focusing on small but crucial details, Lexus has created an impressive new member of the RX family, adding more seats to the cabin yet maintaining all of the comfort, convenience and quality that are true to the brand's omotenashi principles of hospitality.

The new model is now available to order in the UK, with customer deliveries commencing mid-May.

Inside the new RX L there are two extra seats, generous knee and headroom for everyone and plenty of space for luggage. But on the outside, the car is only 110mm longer than the five-seat model – barely the width of a man's hand.

In fact, it's by adding those few extra millimetres that Lexus has gone further than most of its competitors, in effect creating a new body for the RX, rather than trying to squeeze more seats into its existing model.

At first glance, there's no mistaking that this is an RX, with all the intriguingly

elegant and incisive styling that make it of the best-looking models in its class. The designers were clear that the RX's distinctive coupe-like profile had to be preserved.

But look more closely and you will notice that not only is the RX L longer at the rear, the angle of its tailgate has been made slightly steeper.

That fine adjustment is actually important in making sure there's comfortable headroom for anyone sitting in the third row of seats.

Even more valuable millimetres have been gained simply by moving the rear wiper mechanism from the top to the bottom of the window.

Open the door and you will see just how smart a solution Lexus has come up with to provide a third row of seats and a lay-out that's easy to adapt when you need more space for luggage.

Raise the seats, or stow one or both of them flat: it just takes the press of a button.

The seats are finished to the same high quality as the rest of the cabin and are comfortable for youngsters or adults for long journeys or shorter trips. The RX L



The first seven-seat version of the RX luxury SUV, the new Lexus RX L

means that when you want a night out with friends for example, you need only take one car.

The cabin is designed to be a social space, what Lexus designers call a

"lounge" effect that's open and light and where it's easy for everyone to see what's happening, share conversations and enjoy the in-car entertainment together on longer journeys.

Driving campaign to transform our mental health awareness

Ford is launching a national awareness campaign that encourages people to speak more openly about mental health and to find safe, non-confrontational spaces to talk.

With the aim to reduce the stigma surrounding discussions on mental health, Ford has partnered with "Time to Change", an established mental health campaign run by the mental health charities, Mind and Rethink Mental Illness.

Around one in four people in the UK experiences mental health problems and young men, in particular, have been identified as a vulnerable demographic. Only a third of men (34 per cent) would talk openly about their feelings, while just under one third (31 per cent) of men said that they would be embarrassed about seeking help for a mental health problem.

A national public awareness film, promoting the front seat of a vehicle as a safe space to talk, leads the campaign after research, conducted by Ford, found that over two-thirds (67 per cent) of people said they were more comfortable talking about issues when in a vehicle.

"One in four of us go through mental health issues at some point in our lives, so it really affects us all, be it through personal experience or through the people we know," said Ford of Britain chairman and managing director, Andy Barratt. "As the market-leading car and van brand in the UK, Ford is an important part of

At the pledge signing: Sue Baker OBE, Andy Barratt, Charles Bilyeu and Matt Loynes

society and we want to use that relationship to reach as many people as possible and encourage them to ask one simple question – "is everything OK?"

Andy Barratt and Charles Bilyeu, chief executive officer, Ford Credit Europe Bank, have both signed the Time to Change Employer Pledge, making Ford one of the first automotive manufacturers to promote mental health awareness in the workplace. The pledge commits the organisation to deliver actions aimed at increasing the mental health support available to employees, working in conjunction with Mental Health First Aid England.

"A vehicle is a great place to start talking because it's like your own private bubble, where you're on a journey together and you're shoulder to shoulder," says Ford engineer and employee champion, Matt Loynes, who came through the lowest point of his mental health issues with the support of a friend. "This is about getting everyone on-board and making it part of the culture to take a moment to listen to friends, colleagues and family, to understand and to find the right help for them."

"We're delighted that Ford is committed to improving attitudes towards mental health," said director of time to change, Sue Baker OBE. "Their support will help hit home the message that we all have a role to play in looking out for one another's mental health. As Ford's public awareness film highlights, talking about mental health doesn't have to be the elephant in the room."

Ford and Time to Change have also come together to create five 'top tips' as a starting point to help people across Britain to spot the signs and offer the necessary support:

- Text/Call Reach out – start small
- Find a good time and place
- Go for a coffee
- Ask how they are – listen without judging
- Treat them the same

"Having a mental health problem can be incredibly isolating, but knowing that there are people around you who care, and will listen without judgement, can make all the difference," continued Sue Baker OBE, "If you're worried about a friend, loved one or colleague, don't hesitate to reach out and ask them how you can help."

For more information, visit www.ford.co.uk and www.time-to-change.org.uk



Ford Drives Campaign to Transform Mental Health

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16 66	ADAM ENERGISED 1.2 RED N ROLL 6,500 MILES	£9495			14 64	MOKKA EXCLUSIV 1.4T 5DR SUMMIT WHITE 27,200 MILES		£10495					
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12 62	CORSA ACTIVE 1.4 3DR ASTEROID GREY ONLY 28,500 MILES	£5995			15 15	MOKKA SE 1.7CDTI AUTOMATIC ASTEROID GREY 16,000 MILES ..		£11995					
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15 15	NEWCORSA DESIGN 1.4 AUTOMATIC 5DR ONLY 12,500 MILES	£9495	£9295	£20	12 12	MINI COUNTRYMAN COOPER 1.6D 5DR WHITE/BLACK 42,200 MILES		£9495					
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16 16	NEW CORSA LIMITED EDITION 1.4 3DR CARBON FLASH 7,600 MILES	£8695			16 16	CITROEN C4 CACTUS FLAIR 1.6HDI SAT NAV RED 24,000 MILES	£10295	£9995	£300				
16 16	NEW CORSA VXR 1.6T 3DR LIME GREEN 7,100 MILES	£12995			16 16	HYUNDAI IX20 SE 1.4 BLUE DRIVE 5DR WHITE 8,200 MILES.....		£10695					
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How to improve a car's performance by 70%

The effectiveness consultancy Benchmarking recently analysed what happens when companies include press advertising in their media mix.

They looked at more than 500 econometric models, covering a five-year period and, as the table here shows, they found that adding newspapers dramatically increases the effectiveness of other media.

In the automotive sector they reviewed companies that ranged from the big spending German goiaths of the industry to medium sized independent carmakers.

And they discovered that by adding newspaper advertising to their campaigns, they cranked up their effectiveness by over 70%.

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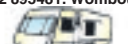
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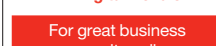
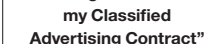
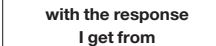
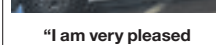
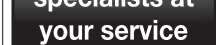
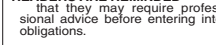
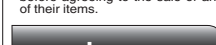
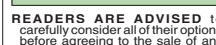
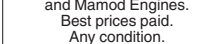
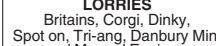
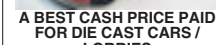
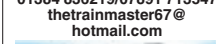
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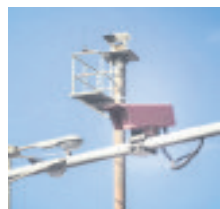
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Denise Lewis celebrates winning the Gold medal in the Women's Heptathlon at the Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia



Denise Lewis celebrating winning the Gold medal in the Women's Heptathlon at the Olympic Games in Sydney

Champ Denise dreams of a new golden generation

SPORTING FEATURE

By Matt Maher

"It's a case of: 'I'm here, I've got the vest, let's see how I acquit myself with the challenges ahead'"

HAVING famously reached the pinnacle of her own sport by being crowned Olympic champion, Denise Lewis wants to make it easier for future generations to chase their dream.

Wolverhampton's golden girl has once more been a regular presence on our TV screens, in her familiar role as pundit for the BBC during its coverage of the Commonwealth Games.

Except this time, Lewis has more invested in the action than most.

Since 2015, she has been president of Commonwealth Games England, the organisation responsible for, among other things, ensuring English athletes have the best chance to shine on the Gold Coast.

Lewis and her team have spent time scouting training venues, sourcing sponsors, while also focusing on the many and varied logistical demands of a major championship.

We meet at the official announcement of a new sponsorship deal with the energy company, npower. Such things are often, understandably, overlooked by fans.

Entwined

Yet for Lewis – and more particularly the athletes – the two are often entwined. "Funding is tight," she says. "We're grateful to have these sponsors come on board. Of course it is great for the brand. But it is also about what we can do for the athletes and how we can continue to flourish."

Lewis replaced double Olympic champion Kelly Holmes in the role after England had finished top of the medals table at Glasgow 2014.

"The challenges have been making sure we get the tone right, the right venues."

"The checking back and forth, right from the Youth Games, that was important, where we bring on talent, how we can support their pathway through to senior events?"

Though three decades have passed since she travelled each day from Tettenhall's Regis School to train in Birmingham – Lewis remains hugely passionate and acutely aware of her roots.

"I think I mirror the beginning of many athletes, particularly from this region," she says.

"There was a lot of travelling, facilities weren't always brilliant. But having something to focus on, to express yourself, can really turn your life around. It's that ripple effect, making someone else think differently or join you in that journey."

"I know who helped me along my way – my school teachers, from primary to secondary and beyond, my work colleagues. That inspires me. How can we make a difference? How can we give athletes coming through a reason to compete for their country?"

The theme of progression is one continually repeated by Lewis and from an athlete's perspective is often the very purpose of the Commonwealth Games.

Often referred to as the 'Friendly Games' – it has a well-earned reputation as a breeding ground for future stars. There is no better example than Lewis herself, who twice won Commonwealth gold before going on to be crowned champion at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

"The Commonwealth Games is so, so important. It's integral to the pathway," she says. "If you can win there, it can really hold you in good stead for the future. There are athletes going to these championships with no senior international experience."

"In my event for example, the heptathlon, Niamh Emerson has been selected for the first time, a great junior athlete and she'll be using that opportunity to see how she will handle her nerves."

"It's a case of: 'I'm here, I've got the vest, let's see how I acquit myself with the challenges ahead'."

"Being so far away from home, the jet lag, the different time zone and the pressure of being such a big team. It's very different. Then you'll have the expe-

rienced athletes who are at their second or third and will want to go out on a high."

According to Lewis, those experienced athletes also have a role to play in helping their younger teammates move up to the next level.

"You could be next to an Olympic champion, for example. You watch how they conduct themselves."

Though the entire England team consists of nearly 600 competitors, most of Lewis's attention during the Games will naturally be drawn to the track and field events.

Lewis believes a busy year, with the World Indoors having already taken place and the Europeans scheduled at the end of the summer – has perhaps added another layer of difficulty to a Championship where medals are typically expected rather than hoped for.

"The ambition is big, we have a great team. But you know the friendly rivalry we have down under it's not going to be easy. They (the Australians) prepared and up for the challenge."

"A lot of athletes will have gone into the winter with real gusto, there are three big championships, the Commonwealth Games is one they'll be citing where they can really make their mark. Some athletes aren't able to win on the global stage."

Deliver

"But they can make sure they deliver in an environment which is welcoming, they'll have good weather and all things combined, the optimistic ones will be looking to do really well."

And four years from now it is this region which will take centre stage.

The Perry Barr school in which we meet is barely 15 minutes walk from the soon-to-be renovated Alexander Stadium, while a small, until now unremarkable corner of Smethwick will be the home of a new world-class swimming facility.

Lewis has spent the morning running a coaching session for pupils and believes there has never been a better time to begin inspiring the stars of the future.

"This is where we start sowing the seeds," she says.

"Something big is happening to Birmingham – it's very exciting and children today in four years they'll be in secondary school and hopefully doing more sport. One of these kids might be on the path to being involved in sport in a serious way."

Staffs hit heights of aerobics excellence

SOUTH Staffs Aerobics Club are targeting national glory after hitting the heights at the West Midlands Regional Championships.

The club, which is based in Hawks Green, Cannock, produced a stunning series of displays that resulted in their best-ever haul of medals with all 28 members returning home with a gold or silver.

Gemma Chilton, who runs the club, was left staggered by the success. "This is our best year yet for sure," she said. "We have been running for 19 years. Last year we had gymnasts in the top six, but this year we went with 28 athletes and 11 partnerships and all 28 participants came back with a gold or silver medal, and eight of the partnerships won their grade."

Now South Staffs' winners will go on to represent the club and the region at national level. The club are hoping to get more people involved. They have a range of ages, with their youngest participant being three years old, and the eldest 22. Gymnasts must be born between 1997 and 2002. To arrange a trial email southstaffsaerobics@yahoo.co.uk

Oldswinford must play waiting game

OLDSWINFORD cricketers must play a waiting game after rounding off their WCB Indoor League campaign with a victory.

A final ball success against Chaddesley lifted Oldswinford to the top of the table and now they are sweating on the results from Stourbridge and Coombs Wood's final games with both sides able to overhaul the leaders.

Chaddesley posted 110-2 against Oldswinford, who were indebted to a fine knick from Tom Blunt in reply.

He ended unbeaten on 37, hitting the winning runs off the final delivery of the game. Alex Bullingham also impressed with 25 not out.

Quatt just missed out on recording their first win of the season in their final outing as they went down by seven runs to Pedmore.

John Hurdman (26 not out) helped Pedmore to 105-3.

Quatt started their reply impressively with Dan Plank (25 not out) leading the victory charge. But they lost their way in the second half of the innings and were restricted to 98-3.

400/1 for Wolves to be Premier champs

WOLVES may have only just won promotion, but they already being priced up by bookmakers for their first season back in the Premier League.

Nuno Espirito Santo's men have been quoted as 400/1 by bet365 to become champions in their first season back in the top flight – a feat no team has achieved since Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest won the title in 1977/78.

Should your sights be set a little lower, you can get 20/1 for a top-six finish – which would see European football return to Molineux for the first time since the 1980/81 season.

Odds are also priced at 7/4 for a top-half finish and 2/5 for a bottom-half position, while Wolves are as long as 5/1 to make an instant return to the Championship.

Bet365's Steve Freeth said: "There's a bullishness from Wolves fans about their return to the Premier League and you sense the club aren't returning just to make up the numbers."



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Glassboys denied by late penalty

Stourbridge 2 Workington 3
STOURBRIDGE endured a flat atmosphere and performance as youthful Workington returned to Cumbria with maximum points.

The Glassboys, coming off a 4-1 week-end victory over Stalybridge, fought back from behind thanks to strikes from Brad Birch and Luke Benbow, but quickly conceded a leveller and succumbed to Steve Rigg's late penalty.

Workington led three minutes in when Rigg crashed in a header off the underside of the bar from Robert Wilson's corner.

Wolves loanee Nicu Carnat tried to inject some life and went close with a twice-hit effort 15 minutes in.

The move of the match brought about the leveller as Carnat, Benbow and Chris Gallagher combined before Birch burst through and lashed in. Stourbridge were on the front foot and they moved in front two minutes after half-time.

Benbow picked his spot with a 25-yard free-kick from the left of the box, caressing over the wall and inside the near post.

But the joy lasted less than a minute as Jordan Holt rolled into Leo Holliday, whose 18-yard shot trickled via a small deflection into the bottom left corner of Matt Gould's goal.

Workington enjoying marginally better fortunes in the final third and when home defender Darryl Westlake tangled with Sam Smith, Rigg stroked in from 12 yards to decide matters in front of the 379 crowd.

Yeltz are checked after visitors grab added time leveller

Halesowen 1 Ashton 1
IMPROVING Yeltz had to be content with a point after Evo-Stik League Premier Division play-off chasers Ashton fired home an equaliser in the final seconds of added time.

Ashton went close in the 10th minute of an even first half when their captain Josh Granite rose high to head Sam Sheridan's free-kick against the crossbar. Just a minute later, Lee Hughes was put clear on the Ashton goal but shot straight at goalkeeper Dave Carnell.

The Yeltz thought they'd taken a 30th-minute lead when Hughes set up Ahmed Ali to slot home, but his effort was ruled out when the referee's assistant pointed out that the earlier throw-in should have been taken by the Robins.

Home substitute Roland Agbor changed the game and caused immediate danger with a 66th-minute shot before he put the Yeltz ahead four minutes later with a fine 10-yard finish at the end of a weaving run. But Liam Tomsett had the last word when he finally beat Platt with a low shot to level with the final move of the game.



Winners - Maria Catalano, left, and Reanne Evans

Dudley double snooker triumph

IT was a double Dudley triumph at the WLBS Festival of Women's Snooker tournament at Leeds when Reanne Evans and Maria Catalano teamed up for a 3-0 victory over Laura Evans and Suzie Opaic to win their first world women's pairs championship.

It was three out of three trophies for Evans. Earlier at the Northern Snooker Centre she came back from 3-1 down to claim the 2018 World Women's 6-Red Championship following a dramatic 4-3 victory against Ng On Yee. Evans had also beaten her rival Ng On Yee to capture the World Women's 10-Red Championship 4-1.

Last week in the World Championship qualifiers Evans' hopes of reaching the finals was brought to an end by former quarter-finalist Dominic Dale, the world number 44.

The 32-year-old from Dudley lost 10-7 to Welshman Dale in the first round of qualifying.

Evans is an 11-time women's world champion and was one of two women included in the 128-player draw for this year's World Championship, the other being reigning women's champion Ng On Yee.

On Yee was knocked out at the first hurdle by Matthew Selt, losing 10-1.

STOKE SUNK BY DOMINANT DK

DK 25 Stoke 17

THE return to Heathbrook paid dividends for Dudley Kingswinford as they began in dominant form building a 21-0 lead over the visitors from the Potteries.

Stef Shillingford was first under the posts, Sam Vaughan adding the extras. Then DK added a second try after Connah Jones challenged the Stoke defence for Danny Hawkins breach the visitors for the second try, again two points added by Vaughan.

DK were awarded several penalties and it was from one that they added their third try. A quick penalty by Jordan Brookes and a slick back move gave right-wing Tommy Walker the time and space to make the line. Vaughan added.

The DK faithful were brought back to earth by an opportunist try from Stoke's Will Sant, who reacted quickly as DK lost concentration. He took a quick tap and was under the posts before most people realised. Charlie Maskrey made it seven.

Threatening

On 38 minutes Vaughan passed the ball back inside to centre partner Shillingford, who carried the move on and Jordan Brookes who was through to score. Vaughan took the lead to 28-7.

The final moments of the half were a portent of what was to come with Stoke upping the intensity and threatening the DK line with a yellow card for a late tackle on Nick Adams. But the try bonus point was already secured.

Stoke started the second half a better side, coming back to 28-12, and DK were dealt a blow when Pete Griffiths was forced off, replaced by Joe Tigh. Stoke pressure continued and Maskrey got down the wing for another try, 28-17.

The final minutes saw DK back on top inspired by a long run by Callum Nicholls. The team upped a gear as good forward play shortened the Stoke defensive line. Vaughan made the most of a two on one to cut back for the try and he converted himself to take the final score to 35-17.

On Saturday DKs make the short trip to Stourton to face Stourbridge Lions.

Peak performances at Games



Stourbridge's Rachel Wallader in action at the Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast

WORDSLEY'S Dominique Allen has returned home from the Commonwealth Games with a silver medal, whilst Stourbridge athlete Rachel Wallader just missed out.

Allen, the 28-year-old basketball player and her England team lost their final 99-55 to Australia, but she was thrilled with her whole experience on the Gold Coast.

"So happy," she said. "This is one of the highlights of my career. I went to the Olympics. You can't pick. Winning a medal is amazing in the Olympics when it's in your home country. I can't pick which is better."

"I hope basketball gets some really good exposure. This shows that we can win medals on big stages against the best teams in the world."

Wallader hit a season's best in the Commonwealth shot put final but missed out on a medal and the Stourbridge thrower was left to rue what might have been. The 28-year-old threw 17.48m, good enough for sixth in the final. It was a slight regression on fourth place four years ago in Glasgow but that distance would have won her a medal in Scotland in 2014.

"This is the best I have thrown in a major so there are a lot of positives," she said.

Dave likes to be beside the seaside

WITH many runners looking ahead to the London Marathon, there were only a few racers in action at the weekend from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club.

Dave Hickman was first off the spring marathon blocks competing in the Brighton Marathon. The classic 26.2 mile distance is always a test and the Brighton course along the seafront can be doubly hard depending on the weather, either strong winds or blazing sun can ruin a good winter's training. Luckily conditions were in his favour as Hickman finished in 3.46.27 to take 1,942nd place.

Closer to home a number of blue hoop jerseys travelled to Stafford for their rearranged half marathon, originally planned for mid March when the race was cancelled due to snow and put back a month.

Over a testing course with some long dragging inclines Dave Norman was first back into Market Square for the hoops with a town centre finish in 1.24.44 to take 36th place overall and third in his age group.

Graham Wildgoose finished in 1.38.06 in 276th, Richard Tonks was 393rd in 1.42.17, Kathryn Sneyd finished in 1.45.45 in 581st place, Russell Fox was 1224th in 1.59.35, Aimee Pugh was 1611th in 2.09.22. 'Fresh' from last week's Manchester Marathon Claire Hancox and Malcolm Beddall finished in 1752nd and 1753rd respectively in the same time of 2.15.02 and Charlotte Tonks was 2205th in 2.45.04.

Tennis club's four team promotions

WOLLASTON Lawn Tennis Club is celebrating quadruple success.

WLTC Men's A and B teams won the top two places in the Hereford and Worcester Winter League division 7, A just two points ahead of B, for both to gain promotion.

The Men's C team also won promotion after finishing second in division 9, having lost only once and that to champions Worcester.

Wollaston Ladies also had winter success with the Ladies B team winning promotion after winning all their fixtures bar one against league winners David Lloyd Bromsgrove.

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